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THE PEOPLE'S BIBLE HISTORY

PREPARED IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT INVESTIGATIONS

BY SOME OF

THE FOREMOST THINKERS IN EUROPE AND AMERICA.

Illustrated Copiously and Beautifully

AND

ACCOMPANIED BY PORTRAITS OF THE SEVERAL AUTHORS.

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REV. GEO. C. LORIMER, LL. D.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

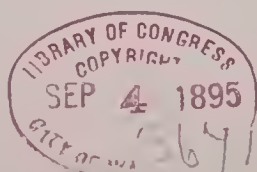
RIGHT HON. WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE, M.P.

VOLUME I.

PUBLISHED BY

THE HENRY O. SHEPARD COMPANY,
CHICAGO.

1895.



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THE AUTHORS—THEIR POSITIONS, DENOMINATIONS, AND THEMES.

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PREFACE.

THE PEOPLE'S BIBLE HISTORY, while planned by the editor in the interest of evangelical religion, was not designed to be either narrow or repressive. Truth is never advantaged by seeming dread of thorough investigation and reasonable freedom of expression. The intelligent public has a right to know what eminent scholars think on subjects closely interwoven with man's spiritual welfare, and to judge for itself how far recent researches may or may not invalidate cherished faiths. It has not, therefore, been considered necessary or desirable by the editor that every representation relative to the human element in the sacred writings which does not command his own approval should be excluded. Certain extreme statements of a purely conjectural and speculative character he has prevailed on their authors to modify or eliminate; and an occasional, and as he trusts, involuntary, display of denominational bias he has ventured to suppress. As the prime purpose of this volume is to unfold the history recorded in the Bible, and not to discuss theories of inspiration or defend a system of theology, a wider range of opinion has been allowed than would have been admissible in other circumstances. But at the same time this generous latitude has made it apparent that there is a distinctively evangelical school of higher criticism — a school loyal to the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, though diverging somewhat from traditional estimates of their documentary sources. While the editor dissents from several of the positions assumed by some of his learned coadjutors, as being inconsistent and untenable, he is more than gratified to acknowledge their manifest loyalty to the Headship of Christ. Assuredly it is a great gain to the Christian world to see for itself that the old faith has nothing to fear from the freest thought and the most brilliant scholarship.

The reader of these pages should realize that the novel views set forth by various erudite teachers concerning the dates and composition of the sacred books, especially of the Hexateuch, are not as yet finally accepted, though, of course, their advocates regard them as irrefutable. But these enthusiasts overlook the fact that while such critics as Dillmann and Delitzsch, on the one side, and Graf and Wellhausen, on the other, coincide in the opinion that the Hexateuch has been compiled out of documents far older than itself, they are not altogether agreed as to the true analysis of its component parts. The differences may be slight, but they are real. Dillmann's A. is Wellhausen's P. C.; while his B. and C. stand for what is usually represented by E. (Elohism) and J. (Jahvist). Wellhausen considers one part of the composition, that marked J., as older than Dillmann does. The latter, likewise, concurs in the general truthfulness of the patriarchal histories as recorded in Genesis, and has no sympathy with Stade who regards their heroes as primitive deities, nor with the former in beginning his "History of Israel" at the birth of Moses. Dillmann is also impatient with some recent Assyriologists who insist on tracing the Biblical accounts of Creation and the Flood to Babylonian sources, rendered accessible by the

Captivity. These variations are instructive and indicate that the end is not yet. There is no doubt that the Hexateuch reveals distinctions in vocabulary, style, and construction, and that narratives apparently are duplicated and enactments repeated on its pages, some accounts being Jehovistic and others Elohistic. But then we have psalms thus differentiated by the Divine Name, and yet no hard unyielding theory of their origin and age has been elaborated from such slim materials. We may, therefore, well pause before committing ourselves irrevocably to all of the confident assertions of modern critics. As dealing with the human side of the Scriptures, with which this history has especially and almost exclusively to do, their suggestions and representations are not out of place, and add immeasurably to the interest and value of this volume; but at the same time they ought to be taken with caution and reserve. Even as these words are being penned, and while the brilliant assaults of George Adam Smith, Cheyne, and Driver, on the unity of "Isaiah," are still fresh in the public mind, Principal Douglas, their peer in learning and ability, is challenging their conclusions in a masterful treatise, entitled "Isaiah One and His Book One." It is consequently impossible at this date to anticipate the final findings of genuine and well-balanced criticism. That must be left to the future. Each author connected with this Bible History is alone responsible for the views he advocates; but whatever these personal teachings may be, every candid student will admit that they have not obscured the sublime truths, which the movements of the mighty past disclose, that God is in all history, and that all the ages have providentially been made tributary to his unique manifestation in the Divine Christ.

From the slow development of religion, which is perhaps the most notable feature of the inspired chronicle, it is evident that we cannot hope to comprehend its meaning in a moment or without patient application. God does not hasten: we cannot. It is also observable, that not only has religion been of tardy growth, it has been the product of various and oftentimes of indirect agencies. At the beginning God did not put coal in the mine, neither did he plant the full-grown tree, but scattered living germs on the earth, which afterward became forests. These forests drank in the sun until they were soaked with flame; then they sank into the darkness to be transmuted in the laboratory of nature into substance for heat and light. Thus the final religion had to pass through successive stages. At first it was but a seed; then it took shape in antediluvian, postdiluvian, patriarchal, theocratical, ceremonial, and prophetic eras—more than once being submerged in the night of exile, oppression, and apostacy—at last to blaze forth in all the splendors of the Christian dispensation. No wonder, then, if the history of this sublime progress should reveal the touch of many hands, and the interblending of diverse materials. It may be compared to a mosaic in which piece to piece has been joined that a glorious picture of heavenly things might be produced. Though the seams and divisions of this picture may not be apparent to all—for the Bible is not fashioned like the Byzantine mosaics, where all the articulations are palpable and rough, but like those of Rome where all the lines are ground down until they are nearly invisible—they still exist; and when some master-workman shows them to us and makes clear the various fragments that enter into the composition of the whole, let it not be doubted that even this may be true, and the divine origin of the grand old book remain uninvalidated. For one controlling, guiding,

unifying mind must have been operative through all the weary ages to produce out of such composite elements a result so wonderfully unique, uplifting, and unfathomable as the Bible: and that mind in the nature of things could not have been human.

It has been customary in volumes of this character to give an account of the four centuries between the last of the Hebrew prophets and the first of the Roman emperors, and to embrace in the narrative a description of the overthrow of Jerusalem. This introduction of material not contained in the Scriptures is justified as necessary to an understanding of the relation existing between the old economy and the new, and to the coherent unfolding of the divine purpose in the calling of the Gentiles. But it has always seemed to the editor that the reason, good and sufficient as it is, for this method, ought to lead the historian yet farther. Instead of arresting his work at the point of catastrophe, he ought to carry it onward to the period of victory. That the student may perceive how Christianity emerged from obscurity to the preëminence it attained under the Cæsars; that he may see how it began to fulfill what was foretold of its career, and observe the manner of its emancipation from the influence of Judaism and from reliance on miracles: in a word, that he may be able to form some idea of its transition by which, though never of the earth, it came to be in many respects like the kingdoms of earth, under the dominion of natural law, there should be furnished, at least in outline, an account of the events which make the two hundred years subsequent to the Apostolic era singularly significant in the spiritual annals of mankind. This will explain the unusual extension of the present treatise beyond the ordinary limits conventionally set to Bible history.

It is only right that the editor should refer in befitting terms to the publishers, and to others who have had much to do in preparing this volume for the press. All that money could do has cheerfully been done by Henry O. Shepard and his partners to render this contribution to religious literature scholarly in treatment and artistic in execution. The paper, letterpress, pictures, and binding speak for themselves, and the names of Gladstone and Farrar, to say nothing of the others, are evidence that the text is not unworthy its beautiful accessories. But if the company has been generous in its use of money, the business manager of the book, Mr. G. L. Howe, has been equally lavish in the thought and labor he has spent on its production. Though the editor is the architect, in a very real sense the book must be regarded as Mr. Howe's monument. He it was who invited the editor to elaborate the plan of the work and choose colaborers to aid in the execution. To him alone is due the merit of enlisting the pen of the Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone in the enterprise; and from first to last he has exercised an unsleeping oversight of its progress toward completion. And now that he assumes control of all agencies employed in its circulation, the public may receive him in confidence as a gentleman entitled to the highest consideration.

No pains have been spared to render the text as accurate as possible. This has not been an easy task, the editor and his literary associates living remote from one another, some of them being beyond the sea. The greatest care has been taken to guard against mistakes; and if the result is in any commensurate degree satisfactory, credit is largely due to the very thorough proofreading done in Chicago, especially by Mr. Robert D. Watts, and to the final supervision of the page proofs in Boston by the Rev. Charles Follen Lee, A.M.,

to whose scholarly attainments and critical taste testimony need hardly be borne. The exhaustive index to the entire work—which it is believed will add much to the value of the publication for purposes of reference—has been prepared with the utmost care by Walter B. Wines, A.M.; LL.B., whose painstaking, conscientious labor is entitled to all praise. And now that this History passes from the workshop of the editor to the great world outside, he trusts that it may find its way into multitudes of homes, and prove a fresh incentive to the study of that mysterious Book, wherein the highest genius of man appears enkindled and inspired by the Spirit of God.

GEORGE C. LORIMER,

TREMONT TEMPLE,

BOSTON, U. S. A.

JUNE 4, 1895.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION,

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

I.

[T] sometimes happens, in the crisis of a great engagement, that the fiercest of the conflict rages round the standard, which the one party is struggling to capture and the other to save from the grasp of hostile hands; and it is even so at the present day with reference to the subject of this prefatory notice. There is a banner which waves, and which is seen to wave, on high, over the whole of that field—the widest and by far the most noteworthy in the world—on which is being fought out the battle that is the greatest of all battles, and that ultimately may be found to include all the rest: the battle of belief in Christ. Is there, or is there not, one great and special revelation of the will of God to mankind, vital to the welfare of the human race?

This banner is the banner of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Vast and essential as is the living agency by which the work of the Gospel is to be carried on, and to which, indeed, it was first committed by the Savior, that living agency is for the present broken up into fractions, which seem to maintain or even to consolidate themselves on their separate bases, and no one among which commands the adhesion of so much as one moiety of the entire body. But there is no division, or at the least there is no great and vital division, among Christians even as to the canon of the older Testament; as to the Testament of the Gospel, or the new covenant, there is no division at all.

There was a preparatory period after the ascension of our Lord, approaching three centuries in extent, during which the several books of the New Testament were exercising a profound and comprehensive influence, although the Canon, or complete list of the books acknowledged as due to divine inspiration, had not yet been completed. Even after that preliminary stage, paganism had enough of remaining strength in its death agony to continue its partial and spasmodic efforts, which can hardly be said to have altogether ceased when the sword of Mahomet and his successors invaded and seriously curtailed the territory that had been already won by the Gospel. Yet, upon the whole, the boundaries of the Church, through the course of many centuries, were greatly widened. Not, indeed, without many and sad diversities of experience: aberrations in doctrine, ruptures of communion, extravagant assumptions of authority, and frightful corruption of manners acknowledged on all hands. Yet the life from within could not be repressed, and more and more lands were added to the Gospel profession. In modern times, the process of occupying the earth has been carried on more largely by growth of population and by emigration than by bringing new nations within the fold. But during the nineteenth century there has been a marked renewal of activity and progress. Doubtless the kingdom of God within us has been even more doubtful and defective in its development than the kingdom of God without us. But wherever Christianity has gone, whatever its agents have taught, and however little its professors may have adorned their calling, at all times and in all places it has carried with it the acknowledgment of the Holy Scriptures.

Contemporaneously with the attainment and maintenance of this great and unrivaled ascendancy, and in the absence of any comprehensive and effective warfare against it from beyond the borders of Christendom, the conflict, which was noticed at the outset of the present paper, has been raised against this great and acknowledged treasure of all Christians from

within the borders of Christendom itself, and carried on wholly or mainly by those who have passed through the waters of baptism. But formidable as it is, it does not imply either any disposition on the part of the members of Christian communities generally to abate their allegiance to the Holy Word, or their hopes of the coming time. Indeed, it has been simultaneously with the undermining and disintegrating movement that the religion of Christ has assumed more visibly than ever a commanding position in the world. It is for mankind the greatest of all phenomena, the greatest of all facts. It is the dominant religion of the inhabitants of this planet at least in two important respects. It commands the largest number of professing adherents. If we estimate the population of the globe at fourteen hundred millions (and some would state a higher figure), between four and five hundred millions of these, or one-third of the whole, are professing Christians; and at every point of the circuit the question is not one of losing ground, but of gaining it. The fallacy which accepted the vast population of China as Buddhists in the mass has been exploded, and it is plain that no other religion approaches the numerical strength of Christianity; doubtful, indeed, whether there be any that reaches to one-half of it. The second of the particulars now under view is perhaps even more important. Christianity is the religion in the command of whose professors is lodged a proportion of power far exceeding its superiority of numbers; and this power is both moral and material. In the area of controversy it can hardly be said to have a serious antagonist. Force, secular or physical, is accumulated in the hands of Christians in a proportion absolutely overwhelming; and the accumulation of influence is not less remarkable than that of force. This is not surprising, for all the elements of influence have their home within the Christian precinct. The art, the literature, the systematized industry, invention, and commerce—in one word the power—of the world are almost wholly Christian. In Christendom alone there seems to lie an inexhaustible energy of world-wide expansion. The nations of Christendom are everywhere arbiters of the fate of non-christian nations.

In every part and parcel of the mass now so wondrously developed and diversified, there is, and there has for fifteen hundred years been rendered, an allegiance to the Holy Bible, alike uniform, uninterrupted, and unreserved. And that allegiance was consistently applied (though with limited means) in promoting the free circulation of the Scriptures until the sixteenth century, when the circumstances of the time brought about a change, at least within the pale of the Latin or Western Church. And although in the controversies of the day the Bible may perhaps be said to stand upon the defensive, it will surely be admitted that, in and since the early part of the now almost expiring century, it may be said to have issued a kind of challenge to the powers of the world at large. This challenge was first delivered principally from Great Britain, and only by a portion of the Christian body, although that body is now more united with respect to its form; which was the circulation of the sacred volume without note or comment. They were Protestants, they were English-speaking Protestants, they were English-speaking Protestants chiefly of the non-conforming type, or in varying degrees of sympathy with it, who conceived the idea of an association marked, even in its day of small things, by its aspiring and comprehensive aims. Bishop Heber, in the early infancy of modern missions, wrote as to their work, the lines,

Waft, waft, ye winds, his story,
And you, ye waters, roll,
Till, like a sea of glory,
It spreads from pole to pole.

The society, which undertook the work, was not to represent, befriend, or oppose, any particular community of Christians, but it was to circulate the Divine Word among all nations and in all languages. They were to open a great armory where all who would were to find

greatly augmented facilities for obtaining the chief weapon needed in the work of conversion. They were not deterred from their undertaking by the enormous difficulty of reproducing the sacred text in countless tongues, most of them imperfectly understood, many of them wholly unknown, and spoken only by races of uncivilized men, equipped with none but the most limited vocabularies and the narrowest ideas. Nor was their work arrested by the recollection that the church of the New Testament was propagated under the authority of our Savior, in its earlier experiences, not by written documents, but by the agency of living men. They may have reasoned on the belief that living men would continue to supply their proper propelling force, and would derive, from a larger supply of copies of the written Word, a manifest increase of power in the fulfillment of their work. Who can deny that this was a brave and a great, even if an incomplete conception? It would be alike a violation of charity and of common sense to surmise that the founders of the British and Foreign Bible Society had for their leading, or probably for an acknowledged aim any polemical advantage in those controversies which divide Christians. They probably regarded the Scriptures not as a tangled thicket of dispute, but as "a green pasture" of immeasurable richness for the souls of the people of God.

The material result has been beyond doubt remarkable. The Sacred Scriptures have been sown broadcast over the world; and in a new sense "their sound has gone out into all lands." By the agency of this society taken alone, the Bible or integral parts of it have been circulated to the extent of more than one hundred and forty million copies,¹ in three hundred and twenty languages and without any note or comment. Even the purely philological effect of this vast operation has been remarkable. A variety of languages, previously without organization of any kind, have, since and in connection with the action of the society, come to be possessed of lexicons and grammars. There is a further very large British circulation independent of the society, but we may justly borrow from the old mythologies to term it the hundred-handed and the hundred-eyed. Its daily issues from its different depots exceed twelve thousand copies,² and in 1892 they rose for the year to four millions. A kindred institution in America likewise operates upon a very large, if a less gigantic scale. Has this been a casting of pearls before swine, in the sense of thrusting the sacred volume wholesale upon men unprepared for its becoming reception? Who can say but that such miscarriage may have occurred at some point of a prolonged experience, and a vast organization? But there is no reason known to me for supposing that such things, if indeed they have happened, have been more than rare exceptions. This immense multiplication of the copies of Scripture has been not only contemporaneous, but associated with that remarkable enlargement of missionary activity, which has supplied a prominent feature of the religious history of this century, and especially of its latter moiety.

The mental questionings of these times were doubtless brought to bear upon the Scriptures apart from any efforts made to extend their circulation and their influence. These were most active in Germany, which had smaller concern with Bible societies or missions. But the challenge implied in a scheme which may be said to have aimed at carrying the Bible to every member of the human family might also be likely to concentrate the electric fluid of criticism floating in the atmosphere, and to precipitate it upon the object which was becoming so provokingly conspicuous.

II.

If we now turn to the contents of our sacred books, we at once perceive that they have not been framed with any view of evading conflict by the limitation of claims and pretensions. Of the other sacred books, current in the world among various peoples, they take no notice

¹ Annual Report of the Society for 1894, p. 314; with an allowance for the subsequent months not included.

² The "Gospel in Many Tongues," p. 88.

whatever. Their claim to authority is absolute throughout; and the God in whose name they speak is proclaimed all along as the only and as the universal God.

It is to be borne in mind that they never speak of themselves as a whole; although the Old Testament obtains recognition in that character not only from the Jewish race, but from our Savior, in the threefold and popularly understood division of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. The obvious reason of this last designation, which was meant to embrace the whole Hagiographa, was that the Psalms were named first in the list of these books. The New Testament was gradually formed in separate books, as the Old had been. These books appear all to have been issued within about two generations after the lifetime of our Lord, but more than two centuries passed before their systematic acknowledgment and incorporation in a collected mass, although the number of books which did not obtain immediate recognition, so far as they were known, was a very small proportion of the whole. But here we perceive one of the high prerogatives of the Scriptures which helps to explain their close and elastic adaptation to the progressive needs of our race. No other sacred books are so minutely and exactly divided by periods and by authorship. No others cover so vast a range of time and of diversified human history. They began for a family, and they ended for a world. Not given at once and in stereotype, but "at sundry times and in divers manners."¹ This is one of many points of severalty on which it will be right to touch, as marking them off from other records purporting to be in the same mode and sense divine. Nor have they at any period wanted the advantage of attestation from without. It was the office, first of the Jewish people and then of the Christian Church, to bear to them an audible and living witness, which has sounded through all the ages. The flock have attested the documents, while the documents have checked the aberrations and rebuked the shortcomings and the corruptions of the flock. They constitute one great and majestic trilogy, as they present to us, first, the creation and completion of the material universe, with the introduction of man to his earthly home; secondly, his fall from innocence into a state fundamentally deteriorated, through willful sin, together with the immediate dawning of "a light in a dark place," through promises which were to save him from despair; and thirdly, the great redemption from the ruin thus let loose, by the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, with a course of prophetic intimations reaching to the consummation of the world. Is there any other case of a collection of records which thus deals with the destinies of our race from its cradle to its grave, and in this comprehensive grasp asserts its commanding authority over the race as a whole? I apprehend that all other documents claiming kindred with the Bible rather bear the stamp of the occasional or accidental, at any rate of a work ended and put by.

The question of the authorship of the several books of Holy Scripture is far from being identical with that of their genuineness and authority. According to the general and thoroughly reasonable belief of Jews and Christians, this authorship began with Moses, a great man whose position in history is far too solidly established to be shaken. The form of the earliest book appears to show that he collected, under the divine guidance, those primitive traditions of the race, which, whether accurate or not in every particular, retain, and alone retain, all the features required in order to convey to us the outlines of divine government in the creation, administration, and redemption of the world. It is not necessary here to inquire whether each and every portion of the books ascribed to Moses had him for its author, or whether, besides the palpable case of the chapter² which relates his death, other additions in furtherance and exposition of his career may have been made. Christendom at large, as well as the Jewish nation, firmly believe that he and none other was the great legislator of the Hebrew race; that the vital substance of his legislation remains embodied in the Pentateuch; and, as it may be added, that never in human history was any legislation so profoundly and so durably stamped upon the life,

¹ Hebrews i, 1.

² Deuteronomy xxxiv.

character and experiences, even down to the visible and clamant witness of the present day, of those to whom it was addressed.

The higher and inner meaning of these general statements has yet to be brought more pointedly into view. We justly dwell upon the unapproachable elevation, and the wonderful purity of the teachings of the Bible in their general tenor. But it cannot be too clearly understood, when attempts are made to reduce the Bible to the level of other ancient records, that we claim on its behalf this distinction and exclusive character, that it revealed to man truths absolutely vital to all pure religion, and generally admitted to be so, but which were not revealed elsewhere. Our religion, and some other religions extant at the present day, rest upon the doctrine of the unity of God. The Christian creeds, like the Scriptures as Christians in general hold them, teach the doctrine of the Holy Trinity; but this doctrine of the Holy Trinity presupposes, and is based and built upon, the doctrine of the unity. When we proceed to ask how, when this unity has been so largely — nay, in ancient times so prevaiingly — denied and set aside, it has been kept alive in the world during the long period of nearly universal darkness and safely handed down to us, the reply is that it was upheld, and upheld exclusively, as a living article of religious obligation, in one small country, among one small and generally disparaged people, and that the country and the people were those who received this precious truth and preserved it in and by the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

And not only did those Scriptures teach the unity of God, but they taught it with an emphasis, persistency, and authority such as no other work of any period or authorship has equaled; and the doctrine of the New Testament on this subject is really no more than an echo from the doctrine of the Old. If this truth was thus taught by the Old Testament in the Law, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, to the Hebrew race, and that through a long course of centuries, while it was everywhere else at least, and more commonly denied, we have only to take further into view the generally acknowledged truth, that it supplies the only foundation on which the fabric of a pure religion can be reared, in order to make good, as among the old sacred books of the world, not only the superior, but, so far as regards the very heart, root, and center of divine truth, the exclusive claim of the Bible.

I do not, indeed, deny, and shall presently insist, that authentic traces of this majestic truth are to be found elsewhere in old books and old religions; but it is amid a mass of evil and ruinous accretions, which grew progressively around it, and but too rapidly stifled and suppressed it. This, then, does not alter the parallel and even more undeniable fact, that it is in all these cases traced rather than recorded, recorded rather than taught, and, if taught at all, taught with such utter lack of perspicuity, persistency, and authority as to deprive it of all motive power, to shut it out from practical religion, and to leave it, through the long and weary centuries, in the cold sleep of oblivion or under a storm of overwhelming denial.

The Koran, as all are aware, has, outside the Hebrew and Christian precinct, appropriated the pure tradition on which were built the Bible's first beginnings, and taught the unity of God, with abundant vigor, to a considerable section of mankind, reaching probably at the present day to between one and two hundred millions. But the recency of its date places the Koran wholly beyond the scope of the present argument; except in so far as the derivative character of the doctrine, as standing upon its pages, helps to illustrate the authority of the august source from which it proceeded. And it remains true that the vitality of religion, as bound up with this doctrine, hung for very many centuries suspended upon the single cord of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures.

And yet we are still told (I quote from one of the most recent American publications) that the Bible belongs essentially to the same family as the remainder of the Eastern books reputed to be sacred, that it is one of many revelations contained in them; "on the whole the highest and best that the ancient world produced." These books, then, it would seem, are

like children in a class at school; and the Bible, on account of its merits, is promoted to the head of the class.¹

It is not the Bible that produced religion and morals, but religion and morals that produced the Bible.² It is, then, as much as any other, a properly human composition in its matter and in its authority. Yet this same author frankly admits that "the Bible is the parent of monotheism in the world, so far as a book can produce it."³ And, of course, we agree that the monotheism of the written Bible is founded upon a prior communication of divine truth to mankind. It is strange, indeed, if the exclusive guardianship of the great *articulus stantis aut cadentis religionis*, which died out in every other country, was a charge only to be acknowledged in a shuffle for precedence! It is supremacy, not precedence, that we ask for the Bible; it is contrast, as well as resemblance, that we must feel compelled to insist on. The Bible is stamped with specialty of origin, and an immeasurable distance separates it from all competitors.

It may be right to notice in this place that there is a practice, somewhat usual in the Bible and rarely characteristic, I apprehend, of the other ancient books of religion, which pledges the personal veracity of the authors to the direct and definite character of the revelation imparted.⁴ It is not adopted in the historical parts of Scripture. But where laws are to be delivered, it is largely used by Moses with some difference of degree: commonly "the Lord said unto Moses"; or more particularly, as in Exodus xx, 1, "and God spake all these words, saying"; or, as in Deuteronomy xxix, 1, "These are the words of the covenant, which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel." In the utterances of the prophets, from first to last, it is so habitual, with diversities of expression which do not affect the substance, that it is needless to cite them in particular, from "the vision of Isaiah,"⁵ to "the burden of Malachi."⁶ And Saint Paul, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, helps us to comprehend the character of inspiration, and its distinctness in his own case from that more general guidance which is given to the spiritually minded man, when he writes as follows: first,⁷ "unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord"; and then,⁸ "to the rest speak I, not the Lord." These are assertions of a very serious and practical character; they show us that oftentimes the very words, and not merely the general purport, were in question; and they appear, in the subject matter which they legitimately embrace, to show the singular earnestness with which the work of the sacred writers was pursued; if they do not, indeed, oblige us to make our choice between acknowledging inspiration and charging imposture. Let it not, however, be supposed, that while I dwell upon the contrast in dignity and title between the Holy Scriptures and the ancient books of the East, I intend to speak of those more promiscuous works, or of the religious developments gathered round them, with sweeping disrespect. On the contrary, both the religions and the records have their value; and I am cognizant of the fact that in the case of the Achæians, or earliest historic Greeks, the accepted religion embodied interesting and valuable elements of the old traditions preserved for us among the Hebrews, although they had none of the advantage to be derived from the support of written or regular records. Both in subject matter and in the evidence they afford of drawing from a higher than any human source, they offer to us particulars of very high interest from more than one point of view.

Sometimes we may recognize, as in the Assyrian or Vedic hymns, approximations, if with long intervals unfilled between, to those wonderful developments of the inward life of devotion with which the Scriptures, and beyond all other ancient books the Psalms, are so intensely charged. These impressions, outside the Scriptures, have a double value: first, in the testimony which they render to the principles of piety, and secondly, in the exhibition they afford of the

¹ "The Bible, Its Origin, Growth and Character, and Its Place Among the Sacred Books of the World." By J. T. Sunderland, New York, 1893, p. 249. ² Ibid, p. 250. ³ Ibid, p. 258. ⁴ Claimed, however, by Zoroaster. Rawlinson, "Ancient Religions," p. 95. ⁵ Isaiah i. ⁶ Malachi i. ⁷ I. Corinthians vii, 10. ⁸ I. Corinthians vii, 12.

scarcely measurable superiority of the Hebrew records as patterns and guides in the school of religious experience.

Still more remarkable may be considered the moral teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius. They were delivered at a very early date, and herein may have lain one of the reasons of their purity and elevation. We find the American writer already quoted recording with a kind of glee that Confucius taught the golden rule centuries before Christ.¹ A writer by no means favorable to negation gives it as his judgment² that the attempt of a religious party to represent the moral teachings of this great man as standing in close conflict with Christianity is much to be deplored. The golden rule, however, does not come up to the full height of the "second" commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." But we ought to be thankful wherever we find teaching so nearly approaching the truth. Again: the Egyptian "Book of the Dead" vividly depicts the condition of man after his demise, and the judgment to be passed upon him. Although the religion with which this remarkable work was connected be immersed in polytheism, and false tradition enters into the delineation of details, yet on the other hand it gives a more systematic and particular expression to the great truth of the soul's immortality than we find set forth in the Hebrew books, and it is also remarkably sustained by the early records of the Zoroastrian system. All this we accept with lively thankfulness, and, as I shall shortly explain, this is to be recommended from a double point of view.

Take again the case of the Hindoo cosmogony. Deficient as it is in the nobler elements preserved for us in the Book of Genesis, and even absurd in its particulars, one of its points may be compared to a ray of light shining from the far interior through the mazes of an interminable cavern. Its golden egg is said to have been the home of Brahma before his birth. He lay there for a divine year. And a day and night of Brahma's year are equal to 8,620 millions of ordinary years. Is it not within the verge of possibility that this vast extension of time may convey to us, even if in gross caricature, some trace of the fact that the pre-human periods of cosmic and mundane preparation appear to have extended over vast spaces of time?

And finally let us refer to the central truth of the unity of God. In the work which I have cited on "The Jesuits in China" we find that the Chinese were required by the Confucian religion to pay reverent worship to Tien.³ This word Tien was interpreted at Rome to mean the heaven. But in China it was held that the emperor had supreme hermeneutic power, and he steadily maintained that the phrase meant not heaven but the Lord of Heaven.⁴ And further it appears that, in all or some of these sacred books, as we ascend toward their oldest traditions we come more nearly into view of a primeval monotheism. This was held by Ricci, the Jesuit missionary, to be remarkably the case in the ancient religious system of China.⁵ So likewise in the Gâthâs of Persia,⁶ where religion was degraded in later times not only by the full development of dualism, but by the introduction of a multitude of gods and of elemental worship. Thus, again we have, in comparing the Persian books with the Hebrew records, the double witness: first of concurrence, and secondly of a marked inferiority. But apart altogether from the support given to the early Scriptures by resemblance or contrast of contents, is that which accrues from the same sources to their authority. The pure doctrines of religion, and especially monotheism, which the speculations of to-day largely represent as the laborious attainment effected, after many efforts and through many stages, by the agency of human thought, is referred by the traditional belief of Christians to a primeval revelation. This belief might be sufficiently sustained, even did the Hebrew Scriptures stand alone in the world. But the concurrent voice of many witnesses further serves to raise this contention to the rank of an historical and moral certainty.

¹ Sunderland, pp. 26, 27. ² Rev. A. C. Jenkins, "The Jesuits in China," p. 89, also pp. 13, 14. ³ "Laws of Manon," Book I, Sections 9 and 72, edited by G. Pautheir Orleans, 1875. ⁴ "The Jesuits in China," London, 1894, pp. 24, 27, first edition. ⁵ Ibid, p. 13. ⁶ Rawlinson, "Ancient Religions," p. 97, and "Ancient Monarchies III," pp. 104, 105; and particularly, Haug, "Essays on the Parsees," p. 149.

III.

For these Eastern books severally record the most ancient religious traditions of the respective countries where they were in vogue. There is no difficulty in accounting for their diversities. But how are we to account for their points of agreement; of agreement in very high matters; of agreement which in subsequent times, instead of being extended, very largely disappeared?

Here the Hebrew book comes in to our aid; and on this occasion not so much as a transcendental fashion, as by supplying a rational and historical solution to an interesting problem.

It was obviously to be expected, if these nations had a common origin, if they were distributed over the world from a common center, that the religious traditions which they have severally first placed upon record would bear traces of the time when they all had one seat, and (if so it had been) one speech. I shall notice later on what linguistic and ethnographical research have told and are telling us on these subjects. But the Bible had told it to us long before.

Here again it was among the Hebrews, and among the Hebrews alone, that any available and particular record of the primitive condition of mankind was preserved. In the tenth chapter of Genesis we are informed how most, if not all, the races among whom the most interesting records of ancient religion are preserved, sprang from the same ancestry as the Hebrews, and spoke with them a common speech.¹ The fact of a great threefold division is established by linguistic study. Many even of the names can be traced, such as those of the Medes (so much associated in religion and history with the Persians), the Egyptians, and the Assyrians. Testimony from other sources, as to race and language, bring the Indian people within our view; and further developments may come to include China. Although the Greeks have no sacred books, properly so-called, it is not the less true that in their most ancient religious traditions they have transmitted to us many points of marked resemblance to the traditions recorded in Scripture. Of all the races in question the Hebrews alone have preserved what explains at once the concurrence and the diversities in the materials before us. They, and they alone, furnish us with what may be termed a history of primeval man. Does not that history, though it has disappeared from other channels, derive much access of credit from the confirmation given by the Eastern books in other particulars to the Hebrew Books? Is it not a moral certainty that, when the several races came to place upon record the oldest religious traditions which they possessed, the record must have retained, in greater or in less degree, material derived from the stock common to them all before the dispersion? It seems impossible that while one race conserved these traditions in an unbroken line, all others should at once have lost all memory of them. It appears, then, that, so far as their common materials are concerned, all these books drew from one fountain head; and that was a source where the doctrine of primitive and consecutive revelation from God himself to the patriarchal line is consistently and plainly declared. Regarded in this light, the singular and precious elements found in the Eastern books plainly show that the Hebrew traditions were not the particular classic of the Hebrew nation, but the best and most authentic representation of a common original, and greatly corroborate the belief that that original was divine.

The Assyrian tablets have opened to us separate traditions of the Creation and the Flood, in forms of very old date, which powerfully reinforce all these considerations. There is no doubt of the relationship between the narratives drawn from the tablets and the records of Genesis; while a vast moral inferiority in the more precious of the two, that relating to the

¹ Genesis x, xi, 1.

Creation, further shows how greatly our race had to suffer, in proportion as it was cut off from the higher opportunities of learning in the most authentic manner the divine lessons of knowledge as well as of life.

Everything tends, then, to confirm us in the belief that, in the day when the human race was undergoing the first experiences of its infancy, the guiding hand and the audible voice of the Universal Father were made freely available to direct its faltering and wayward march.

I know of no reason, however, why we should not proceed one step farther with respect to these sacred books of the East. If there are particular cases in which any one of them brings into view, or into clearer view, any matter on which the Hebrew tradition is silent or less clear, why should we hesitate to acknowledge that, within these limits, such books are discharging an office specifically their own, and intrusted to them by providential wisdom. It might be allowable to instance the developments as to a future life in the Egyptian and Persian records. But it is one thing to make this avowal; it is quite another to attempt comparing them generally with the Bible, while the glaring fact remains that, after every fair allowance, they provide us neither with the record of our creation, nor with the hope or the plan of our redemption. That is to say, on the matters which are to us of the profoundest interest, they are a blank.

In considering, however, the relations between the Bible and the older sacred books, we should beware of being drawn into captious debate on questions of words. We may be asked whether the prerogative we claim for the Bible is a difference in kind, or whether we are content with the admission of a superiority in degree. Now, a distinction between these two is in common use, and reasonably so. Yet it may be true that this common use is founded more in practical good sense and utility than in any abstract and absolute conception of the mind. Let us seek for illustrations. Does a good man differ from a bad man, commonly so called, in kind, or only in degree? The general conscience would revolt against the proposition that Alexander VI. (Borgia) differed from Savonarola, whom he burned, only in degree. By general consent, such differences are spoken of as differences in kind. Again, is the difference between day and night a difference of kind, or only of degree? The general voice would reply that it is of kind. Yet, upon examination of the matter, it would be found that the difference was one only of degree. And in the former case of the good man and the bad, it might be difficult to avoid dispute on behalf of a similar conclusion, at least until a day shall arrive when the tares are to be severed from the wheat.

An explanation may perhaps be sufficiently supplied as follows: Evidently mere differences of quantity are not always taken, even when enormous, to be differences of kind. Twelve hundred, or twelve thousand, millions, evidently differ from a simple dozen of units to an extent which even bewilders the thinking faculty, and may well be termed immeasurable. Yet it is at once seen that the difference of the two is one only of degree, because there is no change of quality and character between the trifling and the enormous numeral. But when quality and character, when influence and power, are so altered as to make the operation in human affairs of the two things compared fundamentally different and practically opposed, then we reasonably decline to describe the difference as if it were of quantity alone. So, in material things, differences in the percentages of different ingredients may tell upon what we term the essence; and we are perfectly warranted, notwithstanding the rules of kinship as to some important points, in describing the difference between the Scriptures and these other books as a difference in kind, and not only in degree.

Before finally quitting the relation of the Bible to the Eastern sacred books, I will notice another point of much interest, to which attention has been recently called by Dr. Wright.¹ We depend for our knowledge of the Bible, except in the case of a very few who are Hebrew scholars, upon translations. And, evidently, so it must continue to be for an indefinite period,

¹ "Bible Society's Reporter," December, 1893, p. 191.

and throughout the world. But what may be held truly wonderful is that the Bible in a translated form seems not sensibly to lose its power. In Palestine, the Septuagint competed with the original Hebrew. In the English tongue, the authorized version bears, and has borne for centuries, the character of a powerful and splendid original. It has greatly contributed both to mold and to fix the form of the language. From Germany we hear a somewhat similar account of Luther's Bible. In general, even a good translation is like the copy of some great picture. It does not readily go home to heart and mind. But who has ever felt, or has ever heard of anyone who felt, either in reading the English or in other translations of the Bible, the comparative tameness and inefficiency which commonly attach to a change of vehicle between one tongue and another? Is it believed that the Epistles of Saint Paul in English have seriously lost by submitting themselves to be represented in a version? At least it may be said with confidence that there are no grander passages in all English prose than some of the passages of those translated epistles. Such is the case of the Bible in its foreign dress. I am not competent to pronounce that it loses nothing. But it retains all its power to pierce the thoughts of the heart, it still remains sharper than a two-edged sword, it still divides bone and marrow. It does its work. We turn to the other Eastern books—what a contrast they present! Certainly the same opportunities have not been afforded them of operating through a variety of tongues which have been given to the Holy Scriptures. But Confucius and the Koran were translated into Latin in the seventeenth century; and in English they have been accessible for more than one generation. They each assumed a German dress more than a century ago. The presentation of these books in the mass to the modern world is, of course, too recent to be dwelt upon. But the earlier facts show that, had these books been gifted with any of that energetic vitality which belongs to the Bible, a beginning of its manifestation would long ago have been made; whereas there is not a sign that any one of them is likely to exercise, beyond its own traditional borders, any sensible or widespread influence. They appear to sink into a *caput mortuum*, a dead letter. It is a sublime prerogative of the Holy Bible thus to reverse the curse of Babel. They, and they alone, supply the entire family of man with a medium both for their profoundest thoughts and for their most vivid sympathies which is alike available for all; and once more, in a certain and that no mean sense (so far, that is to say, as the work of language is concerned), they make the whole earth to be of one speech.¹

IV.

I next proceed to bring together in a few words some instances selected from the signal confirmations which the Holy Scriptures have received during the present century, through the progress of science and research. Every lover of truth must heartily desire their further advances on the simple and paramount ground of allegiance to truth. We may now, from reviewing what has already happened, entertain rather sanguine anticipations as to the probable effect of new discoveries and fuller maturity of speculation in supplying further confirmations of the general trustworthiness of the early books of Scripture.

First. The discovery of the Egyptian monuments, together with Egyptian research in other forms, has, as may be seen from the works of Brugsch and other leading students, completely established the historical truth of the Mosaic record as to the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt, their forced labor there, and their flight therefrom.

Secondly. Some sixty years back, Dr. Whewell, in his Bridgewater Treatise, spoke with favor but with diffidence of the great theory of Laplace known as the nebular or rotary theory. During the intervening period it has won extensive acceptance in the scientific world, and appears, if not treated as a certainty, at least to hold the field without a present rival. It is

¹ Genesis xi, 1.

in singular conformity with the cosmological account given in the first chapter of Genesis, to which I shall shortly return.

Thirdly. It has been pointed out that linguistic study, especially as to the tongues of the races principally treated of in the Bible, has traced them to a single root-speech, and to a single region, in remarkable correspondence with the statements of the Book of Genesis.

Fourthly. At the same time, and by a parallel movement, ethnological science has taken into view the dispersion and distribution of the human family, recorded in Genesis, chapter x. Tracing the relations between the peoples and eponymists there enumerated, and the eventual settlement of the great triform continent of Europe, Asia, and Africa, it has found in the chapter a striking correspondence with the leading facts of that ethnography. As an historical document, the chapter appears to stand without a peer among archaic monuments.

Fifthly. The discovery, in our own day, of the Samaritan Pentateuch, in actual use among certain descendants of that hybrid people, appears to place beyond doubt, not, of course, the Mosaic authorship of the books of the Torah as they stand, but their public use in their present general form, before the severance, in the tenth century B. C., of the northern from the southern kingdom. For the subsequent rivalry and so frequent enmity of the countries would surely have led to the exposure of any endeavor in either of them, by priests or others, to falsify or substantially change their general tenor.

Sixthly. It seems to be admitted that recent research in the Holy Land, especially the survey by the British Royal Engineers, have confirmed even minutely the statements of the Pentateuch as to cities on the east of Jordan, whose existence the survey brought to light.

Seventhly, and lastly. The records of the Creation and the Flood contained in the Assyrian tablets give strong support to the Biblical narratives. The Creation story indeed loses that which in Genesis is its crowning glory, namely the promulgation of the great doctrine of Creation. It also has a large admixture of inferior elements; and yet not sufficient to efface the undeniable marks of a kindred origin for the two. Both the Assyrian narratives carry certain marks of having proceeded from the same source with those of the Bible. And as they purport to be of a date approaching four thousand years before the Advent, and belong to a people familiar with the practice of regular record, they carry us up to a point nearer to the origin of our race than had before been historically attained. Belonging to a series, they have greater weight than could have attached to them as isolated narratives floating on the sea of time.

In the case of the Deluge, there are particulars on which a question may legitimately be raised as to the comparative accuracy of the two relations. This is a matter of small, if, indeed, of any, consequence in comparison with the confirmation furnished to what we must regard as the essential purport of the tradition. That is to say, that since the appearance of man upon the earth there has been a great penal judgment inflicted upon the race, in its Babylonian seat and perhaps in some wider range, for its sinfulness, by a terrible invasion of water, from which only a handful are known or believed to have escaped. The Creation legend, as has been said, proclaims itself as having departed sooner, and traveled far more widely, from the precious original.

V.

It has now become almost a matter of course, in any statement, however cursory, which deals with the Scriptures at large, to notice that great chapter, the first chapter of Genesis. It was long a favorite subject of attack, and defenders came to be somewhat disheartened and intimidated. But there has grown up in some, I trust in many minds, a conviction that this chapter is a great fortress of the Scriptures, not an open passage through which they may be

advantageously assailed. We should, therefore, accept with satisfaction every proper occasion for noticing, however briefly, its main characteristics.

And at the very outset we ought to cast aside the poor and artificial shelter which some have sought in broadly distinguishing between spiritual matters and matters physical, in which last it is said it was not the design of Scripture to furnish us with an education. Nor is it. But spiritual facts may have a physical side, and facts physical a spiritual side; nor can a sharp or defensible line be drawn between them. The Ascension, the Resurrection, even the Incarnation of Christ, involved strongly physical elements, and such a plea of defense as I have mentioned is one highly dangerous if not fatal to their authority. Even so the announcement of Creation in this great chapter, to mention nothing else, besides being a physical fact, is one of the greatest and most pregnant moral facts in the whole Bible. Renouncing all subterfuge, let us boldly point out the superlative claims and the hardly measurable value of the chapter. Each leading point must, however, be dismissed in a few words.¹

First. The doctrine of Creation, that is the production of matter without any material antecedent, is set in the very forefront of the chapter. And here, as in the case of monotheism, the treasure of this truth is enshrined exclusively in the Scriptures. The great philosophers of old time could not come at it; but the babes and sucklings (for such they were in learning) of the Hebrew race had it, through this inestimable chapter, for a household word. The Psalter, for example, is saturated with it from end to end. The creation of man is a moral fact of the very highest importance. It establishes the title of the Almighty to rule over us, and to dispose of us in a manner which without this doctrine it would be difficult to establish or even to comprehend. It may be added that when once the doctrine of Creation has been firmly founded, every such question as those recently raised and now afloat concerning the possibility of miracle seems to become trivial and even frivolous. What exercise of divine power can we presume to exclude, when we have embraced this sublime and wholly transcendental act as an elementary fact of our religion?

Secondly. The highest peculiarity of the chapter is, perhaps, this: that it propounds, from man and to man, not as speculation or mere opinion, but as authoritative fact, what happened in the heavens and the earth before man himself existed. It has been said that either this was known by scientific inquiry, or by divine revelation.²

There is, indeed, a third alternative, that of hardy and fortunate imposture, but it has not been put into the field, and need not be considered. The idea of scientific inquiry is absolutely inapplicable to a period thousands of years before men dreamt of examining the crust of the earth, to say nothing of its total incongruity with the habits and pursuits of the Hebrew race. What genius and culture did not elsewhere attain could not have been learned by research in a case where genius and culture for such purposes did not exist. And how could science, which presumes all along the anterior existence of man and of the material order, have had the means of learning how that material order originally came into being? There was no *pou sto*, no point of departure from which it could begin to operate.

Thirdly. As a chapter of practical and religious teaching, scientific completeness forms no part of its aim. Its truly rational method is to use such language as shall be most communicative. Hence it makes no definite allusion to the great Reptile age, which had ceased to be represented in nature such as it was presented to primitive man. Hence again, it speaks of the moving of the spirit on the waters, where the elements of water had not yet been disentangled and combined, but by the word water was conveyed effectually and simply the idea of fluid with

¹ The main considerations associated with Genesis i-ii, 4, are more fully treated in my small work, "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture" (Revised Edition, 1892).

² "The Bible, Science and Faith," by the Rev. Mr. Zahm, Professor of Physics in the University of Notre Dame, Baltimore, 1894, p. 30.

motion, as distinct from what is stationary and solid.¹ Fishes and birds are associated together, but placed in their true order of priority. Both are made anterior to the land population. A like orderly succession had been maintained in regard to diffused light, to sea and land, to the concentration of the heavenly bodies severally, and to life in its three great forms as vegetable, animal, and spiritual. Evolution, the darling of our age, has the first chapter of Genesis for its parent source.

Fourthly. Referring the origin of man and animals to a common source, the chapter lays the foundations of duty to the brute creation, which was recognized in the Mosaic law, but not by the ancient world at large. It elevated the conception of duty to the Most High by the special parentage assigned (in verses 26, 27) to the human race. It exhibited the fond and elaborate care with which, through a long succession of stages, God had prepared for man, as a favored child, the home in which he was set down, and which was declared to be "very good."

Fifthly. Objectors have fondly dwelt on the use of the word day, and its sharp division into "the evening" and "the morning," as totally inapplicable to the vast periods deemed to have been required for the operations noted in the chapter. But —

(1) The main question is, whether the phrase was well adapted to convey to the infant mind of man that division of the great work into successive stages which was the main idea required to be conveyed, and which, as we see from the subsequent Scriptures, was clearly conveyed to and retained by the Hebrew race, and by no other race on earth. The power of numeration, even as high as to a thousand, was very imperfectly possessed by all or some races of men as late as the time of Homer. In our own day, large numbers are really conventional symbols, rather than the vehicles of clear ideas; they simply confuse the mind of a child, and in a great degree baffle that of a grown man.

(2) It is noteworthy that, contrary to our common usage, the evening precedes instead of following the morning. It seems to be among the proofs of the commanding influence of this chapter that this appears as the Jewish usage both throughout the Scriptures and down to the present day. And this form appears to be the one which, according to the theory of rotation, is correct. For the first possible marking or notation of time in connection with light would be its diminution on the side of the earth turned away from the central solar mass, and the second when with an increase of luminosity that side again came to face the (incipient) sun. It would be very easy, did space permit, to deal with any other objection which has been taken to the use in the Mosaic narrative of a phrase which has proved its efficacy for its proper purpose by the results exhibited in the literature and usages of the Jews.

(3) If we hold that the days of the great chapter are not periods of twenty-four hours, but great chapters of action capable of overlapping, rather than of mere horological time, this is not a denial that the several stages might have been accomplished in any number of our chronic hours, however small, had it so pleased the Almighty Father. It is because the analogy of nature, which teaches us his ordinary method of operation, points to the prolongation of complex and diversified processes over considerable periods of time as being usual, and we prefer the construction of the word which is agreeable to such analogy.

(4) It is a gross error to suppose that the Christian Church has ever tied itself to the opinion which treats these days as days of twenty-four hours. In the very first ages of the literature of the Church, different teachers and different schools freely and without reproach promulgated different interpretations. This has been well shown in America during the present year, in the work of Professor Zahn already quoted (chapters ii-iv). So that the question was an open one, and never at any period, I believe, has there been an attempt at an authoritative construction of the passages. And now let us thankfully review the security of the position

¹ One modern writer substitutes for the word water "a surging chaos," and another "uncompounded, homogenous, gaseous condition"; truly hopeful modes of conveying instruction to the mind of infantine, primeval man.

which the Bible, and especially the great chapter, holds in relation to present or possible research and its results.

Suppose for a moment that it were found, or came to be granted in the argumentation of science, that the first and lowest forms of life had been evolved from lifeless matter as their immediate antecedent. What statement of Holy Scripture would be shaken by the discovery? What would it prove to us, except that there had been given to certain inanimate substances the power, when they were brought into certain combinations, of reappearing in some of the low forms which live, but live without any of the worthier prerogatives of life? No conclusion would follow for reasonable men, except the perfectly rational conclusion that the Almighty had seen fit to endow with certain powers in particular circumstances, and to withhold from them, in all other circumstances, the material elements which he had created, and for which it was surely for him to determine the conditions of existence and of productive power, and the sphere and manner of their operation?

Or again, if it has been proved (a question on which no opinion need be given) that the years allowed by the chronology of Holy Scripture from the Deluge to the Advent, or from the Creation to the Deluge, are proved by the facts of prehistoric date, which have been supplied through archæology or otherwise, to be fewer than are required according to sound analogies for the occurrences recorded, in what respect need we be discomposed? It has, or it should have been, notorious to us all that the Hebrew text, the translation known as the Septuagint, and the Samaritan Pentateuch, supply three different chronologies, as between which there are no materials for conclusive or authoritative decision. As they differ so that their figures of time cannot all be reconciled, it is plain that no theory of infallibility, however aspiring, will protect them from legitimate criticism. And what right have we to assert, should evidence to the contrary be produced, that the gap between the longest and the shortest has touched the extreme limit which, did we know them, might be supplied by the facts? As each asserts itself against the others, so the actual history might vary from them all, and establish a more extended — possibly even a much more extended — boundary.

Or again if, while Genesis¹ asserts a separate creation of man, science should eventually prove that man sprang, by a countless multitude of indefinitely small variations, from a lower, and even from the lowest ancestry, the statement of the great chapter would still remain undisturbed. For every one of those variations, however minute, is absolutely separate, in the points wherein it varies, from what followed and also from what preceded it; is, in fact and in effect, a distinct or separate creation. And the fact that the variation is so small that, taken singly, our use may be not to reckon it, is nothing whatever to the purpose. For it is the finiteness of our faculties which shuts us off by a barrier downward (beyond a certain limit) from the small, as it shuts us off by a barrier upward from the great; whereas, for him whose faculties are infinite, the small and the great are, like the light and the darkness, “both alike,”² and, if man came up by innumerable stages from a low origin to the image of God, it is God only who can say, as he has said in other cases, which of those stages may be worthy to be noted with the distinctive name of creation, and at what point of the ascent man could first be justly said to exhibit the image of God.

Or, let us open another topic. Let us suppose ourselves confronted with the Quaternary or geological man, and challenged to declare whether a being, if only lodged in a form generally corresponding as to limbs and cranium with our own, is recognized by us as belonging to that family of man which was made in the image of God.³ Our answer is plain. We have no means of knowing what the geological man may have been in respect to that vital condition which stamps his nature as a nature conformable to the Mosaic description. When science supplies us with those means, it will be time enough for us to meet the challenge. We

¹ Genesis i, 26-28.

² Psalm cxxxix, 12.

³ Genesis i, 26.

shall then know whether he had the spiritual, as well as the animal and intelligent life; whether, with circumstantial resemblances, he was apart from us as to essence, or whether we are essentially as well as circumstantially one. He may have been only on his way to that condition which the words of Scripture so beautifully describe. Certain animals, as we know, are endowed with high, and might conceivably be endowed with higher intelligence. Bishop Butler treats them as not absolutely beyond the possibility of being raised to a level with ourselves. There might be beings with higher endowments than any now enjoyed by any creature less elevated than man, and yet who, notwithstanding, might not be capable of attaining to the supreme gift which in some sense allies our nature with Deity. For example: Man is nowhere more clearly severed from the lower orders of the animal creation than as a tool-making animal. A tool-making creature, in the form of a man, would have a position higher than that of any known animal; but can we declare it impossible that there might be such a creature, who nevertheless should not come within the conditions which would declare him to be one created in the image of his maker?

I have dwelt most largely on the value of the great chapter for the purpose of establishing theistic and Christian faith. But we may gladly bear in mind that it was probably given for purposes still higher than those of any controversy or contention, however sacred. While it taught primitive man the doctrine of one God, it also powerfully tended to establish him in his true filial relation to the great Being it had revealed. He saw around him an abundant provision made for his subsistence, his comfort, his childlike delights. He learned something of what he owed to his Almighty Father. And if the great teachings of this chapter were from the first made known to him, they probably gave him all the knowledge which he had faculties to receive, while they trained and disciplined his mind for apprehending more. They contained not a word to darken the pure atmosphere in which he lived. They exhibited to him the march of onward and upward progress, which, so far as our limited faculties instruct us, would seem to be the normal condition of man, when launched on the right lines of progress, as the highest earthly work of God. From this point of view, the chapter might almost in its simple sublimity be termed the Gospel of Paradise.

VI.

There has been a disposition, due, it would appear, rather to zeal than to a prudent estimate of the position, which has led many to maintain the absolute accuracy and truth of every word contained in the book which we properly term the Sacred Volume. But this, like other works, has had to undergo many risks to which other vehicles of human knowledge are subject when in the course of transmission from people to people, and from age to age. The earliest traditions of all may have been orally handed on. When they passed into writing, and afterward into print (which has neutralized many of the previously existing risks), the business of custody and of copying and the special necessity of translating a book intended, after a preliminary season, for all mankind, were matters such that an absolute immunity from casual errors could only have been obtained, in this or any other case, by a standing miracle. But such an intervention of miracle none have been hardy enough to assert. The question in dispute, therefore, disappears, and absolute inerrability cannot be maintained. Not that such a provision might not have been made, had God in his wisdom so seen fit. It would, however, not have been in keeping with the ordinary conditions of the dispensations under which we live; and, both here and elsewhere, it is the sufficiency, rather than the absolute mechanical perfection, of the provisions made by God for the attainment of his purposes, on which we have to rely.

In this case, however, we are not left to the operation of mere presumptions for the determination of the case. We have to meet the broad fact that there are before us two texts at

least of the Hebrew Scriptures, which are rivals in authority. The one is in the original tongue; but the other, the translation of the Septuagint, was made from manuscripts far older than any of those from which our Hebrew Bible is derived. The differences are sometimes irreconcilable. But both authorities are cited, apparently with indifference, by our Lord and by his apostles. Where they differ in substance, we cannot suppose the two to be equally authentic, or there would be two channels of infallibility instead of one. Here, then, we have the existence of some forms of error, smaller or greater, established beyond doubt. Even if an explanation could be found for such a conflict, it could not cover the case of the three chronologies. The principal differences attach to the period between Adam, or the Creation, and the emigration of Abram from Haran. For this the Septuagint¹ gives a period of 3,279 years; the Hebrew, 2,023; and the Samaritan text, 2,324. It is almost as difficult to place in any other category the differences as to certain genealogies. Next to them may be specified numerical statements bearing upon their face the highest probability of an error of copyists, commonly by exaggeration. The numbers assigned to the children of Israel when they quitted Egypt²—600,000³ on foot that were men, besides children—may be quoted as an instance, and others could be readily supplied. It seems not impossible that while the introduction of errors in numerical statements is peculiarly common and easy (most of all when numerals, as in Hebrew, are designated by letters), the particular direction of these errors may be partly due to the bias of Jewish patriotism.

Again, there are instances where no phrase aiming at scientific accuracy would have conveyed an intelligible idea, and an expression in itself imperfect supplied the only vehicle available for reaching the apprehension of the race in its infancy. Such is the case of Genesis i, 2, already noticed. Among the well-known cases are those in which the movement of the sun and the immobility of the earth are described, and those which speak of corporal organs in connection with the Almighty.

We may proceed a step further to notice, by way of example, those passages of the Psalms which, if literally and grammatically construed, might be held to affirm a real existence for the gods of the heathen. For we are told that God “is a judge among gods”;⁴ again, “worship him, all ye gods”;⁵ and once more, “thou art exalted far above all gods”;⁶ while we know from other Psalms that “the gods of the heathen are but idols,” “the work of men’s hands.”⁷

Reasons have already been given why we should decline on behalf of such passages to accept, when they will bear it, the unsafe excuse, not always true as matter of dry fact, that they refer to such departments of knowledge as lie beyond the scope of the Scripture revelation. This idea is capable of a just application, but partially and by no means universally. Let us frankly and fearlessly accept the comparatively few inaccuracies of the text as they stand; they make no sensible deduction either from the value or from the efficacy of the Bible. It is not in these matters that we touch any serious portion of the case. The objector advances his principal line of battle when he brings together from the pages of the Old Testament a list of acts which, as he thinks, offend the moral sense, but which, in some of the cases, are passed without censure, and in others even attract emphatic praise. Such are the sacrifice of Isaac, the reception by Rahab of the spies who were hostile to her country, and the slaughter of Sisera by Jael; a list to which I will only add the destruction by Jehu of the Baal worshipers. I need not touch the cases on which the Bible passes no judgment; and any notice taken here of these grave matters must be slight and insufficient.

I pass by the case of Abraham with these remarks only: that he, who probably had learned through the tradition of Enoch that God had modes of removal for his children other

¹ “Smith’s Bible Dictionary,” Art. Chronology. ² Exodus xii, 37. ³ A number raised to over two millions by reckoning those males who could not walk, and also the females. “Speaker’s Commentary” *in loc.* and “Student’s Bible,” do.
⁴ Psalm lxxxii, 1. ⁵ Psalm xcvi, 7. See also Psalms lxxxix, 7; xcvi, 4; cxxxvi, 3; cxxxviii, 1. ⁶ Psalm xcvi, 9.
⁷ Psalms xcvi, 7; cxxxv, 15.

than death, may well have believed that some such method would at the critical moment be devised for Isaac; and that what is commended in him by the Bible is not the intention to slay his own son with his own hand, but¹ the ready assent to the privation he was to undergo in the frustration of the promise that the Messianic line should descend from him. But I will dwell upon the case of Jael, because, although she is not commended in the New Testament among the witnesses of faith, she is emphatically praised by Deborah the prophetess; and because, on the other hand, she is commonly made the subject of the severest and most unqualified censure; as though, from the objector's point of view, the case admitted of no discussion. The swoop and haste of these judgments perhaps mainly serve to show with what laxity questions are sometimes handled, when the matter at issue is only thought to be the honor of Almighty God.

It is urged, however, that her conduct displayed the extreme of violence combined with the extreme of deceit, and with the profanation of the laws of hospitality, against a man with whom she and hers, the house of Heber the Kenite, had no quarrel.

This, as a bare statement of fact, is mainly true. But, on the other hand, and as regards social duty, was not the first social duty of Jael rather to the children of Israel — her family being derived from Jethro the father-in-law of Moses — than to Sisera, with whom she had no other than a negative relation? Was not Sisera the chief agent and representative of a power which was seeking by war to extirpate or enslave the Israelites? Did Jael, or did Sisera, create the dilemma? And what were the alternatives set before her by the act of Sisera? He demanded shelter; he required of her² that she should deny his presence in her house, and should use against those who were first entitled to her sympathies the instrument of falsehood which she turned against him. Surely all the reason of the case was not on the side of this demand! What were the alternatives before her if she complied with it? The victorious Israelites were in hot pursuit; and Barak's path lay by her house. As a lone woman she was in no condition to refuse him entry to her house altogether. Had she denied his presence as he required, and had her house been searched, her life must obviously have fallen a sacrifice to the vengeance of the victors; nay, rather to their just resentment. Had they waived the search, and had Sisera in consequence made good his way to Hazor, with what purpose would he have gone there? Certainly, and from his point of view justly, he must have gone there still to fight his people's battle; that is to say, again to carry fire and sword, at the earliest practicable moment, through the homes of Israel. Had she no duty to her own flesh and blood? none to the people in whose land she dwelt, and with whom by her husband's descent she stood in a bond of sacred alliance? She knew, too, that Sisera and his friends were laid under the curse, as inhabitants of Canaan, which God had laid upon that people for their wickedness; so that except by disobedience to God the Israelites were under a general command to withhold from them clemency in war. I do not prosecute this branch of the subject, which sometimes is so handled as to involve the assumption that no amount of wickedness could warrant the extinction of the nation involved in it.

Now, I submit that what has been said shows that there were very grave difficulties in this case from whatever point of view it may be regarded. I have cited a statement of it wholly adverse to Jael. Let me put the case in her favor. There was war — a war of extermination. When she was compelled to take a side, she rightly took the side of those with whom she had special ties. She slew a man, but it was a man who, more than any other, was the life and soul of the war against those whom she had made her own people. She slew him in her own house; but it was not she who brought him there. She sacrificed his life for her folk. He had desired her to expose her own life for him. She slew him with deceit and falsehood. But these are of the essence of stratagem in war, and could the Israelites, or those denizens who took their part, be expected to refrain from them?

¹ Hebrews xi, 17.

² Judges iv, 17-20.

I think that, viewing the question with the modern eye, we might say that there was no course open to Jael which was in all respects satisfactory. Dr. James Mozley, who stands in the first rank of English theology for the present century, has given us a masterly discussion of this subject in the sixth of his "*Lectures on the Old Testament.*"¹ It was evidently a case of conflicting duties. Human life furnishes from day to day abundant minor examples of such cases; and there are many of them, for which, with our limited faculties, we can find no satisfactory solution. Dr. Mozley observes justly (p. 150) that with admiration there must here be mingled a certain repugnance; something rises up within us against the act. The same observation applies to-day in the more difficult of the cases where conflict of opposing duties has arisen. Difficulty for us only springs up when we contemplate the glowing and unqualified eulogy of Deborah.² But that eulogy was pronounced under a partial and progressive revelation; under a system where the Almighty, in that earlier stage of human experience, authorized and enjoined modes of action toward public enemies such as have never found a sanctioned place under the Christian system. In this view, we are little concerned with the case.

Let us state the upshot in the form least favorable to our estimate of the Bible. The sacred book states in bare outline, and at various epochs approves, certain acts in whole or in part irreconcilable, so far as we see, with the law of Christian love. It only indicates, and does not give us the advantage of knowing, the contemporary argument in defense. These acts are, in perhaps the most difficult case, analogous to acts which are now produced in times of violence, and which, being so produced, do not draw down the censure of mankind. Admit that they leave a moral difficulty unexplained. It is in a volume which, taken as a whole, bears a testimony, comprehensive, wonderful, and without rival, to truth and righteousness. How are we to treat the case? I answer by an illustration. Suppose I am reading a work full of algebraic equations, which I find to be a sound and masterly book. But at length I arrive at one which I cannot wholly solve, cannot wholly comprehend. Should I on this account renounce and condemn the book? No; I should reserve it in hope of a complete solution in the future. This seems to be the mode which is dictated alike by reverence and good sense, not only in the case of the Holy Bible, but in regard to the mysterious problems which encounter us when our eyes traverse the field of human destinies at large. We know the abundant richness of the gift we hold and enjoy; as to the small portion of light at present withheld, we contentedly abide our time. Nor let our appreciation of Holy Scripture in any respect be cooled by our becoming conscious that the light it sheds was less full in old Hebrew days than when the fullness of time had come. The slight and hardly perceptible points of difficulty in Holy Writ are doubtless meant, like the far more obtrusive difficulties presented by the face of the world and of life, for the trial, enlargement, and corroboration of the principle of faith in the minds of believing Christians, and thereby for the greater excellence and happiness of man, and the more abundant glory of God as redounding from it.

The Christian apologist need entertain no fear in probing to the very bottom any and all objections advanced, on whatever grounds, against the divine inspiration of the Bible. He cannot claim a mathematical exactitude for every proposition it contains. This is quite plain from what has been already stated, as to matters of fact. Even in the New Testament we find that inspired utterances appear to have been subject, at least in certain cases, to critical and corrective judgment. Saint Paul informs us that God had appointed various officers in the Church, among whom were prophets; and these prophets appear to have ranked near to the apostles.³ He tells us that, in the delivery of what was supplied to them, their free agency was not altogether excluded; for, says the apostle, "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets,"⁴ and accordingly the utterances delivered by one prophet were not exempt from animadversion by his brethren: for again we have, "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let

¹ London, 1877.² Judges v, 24-26.³ I. Corinthians xii, 28.⁴ I. Corinthians xiv, 32.

the other judge" (in the Revised Version, "discern"); that is to say, discriminate, and consequently, if need be, rectify.¹ The notable case of Agabus bears upon this subject. In the name of the Holy Ghost he prophesied that if Saint Paul went up to Jerusalem the Jews would bind him and deliver him to the Gentiles.² Saint Paul did go to Jerusalem. The Jews, in an uproar, were about to kill him; but the Romans rescued him by force from their fury, bound him with two chains and then, having saved his life, proceeded to the examination of his case.³ The substance of the prophecy, as to the danger to Saint Paul's life, was fully verified: but the incidents were materially changed. It may be that, in very early stages of the divine dispensation, there was no such careful provision as in the Corinthian Church against what we may term undigested prophecy. To say that by such provision an element of uncertainty is introduced into the divine Word would be a futile criticism. Elements of uncertainty, in the strict meaning of the words, we have already noticed. But we have also seen, bounding, tempering, and overruling them all, the radiancy of the Divine Spirit, which has flooded the Holy Scriptures with a supply of light that our experience, now reaching over several thousand years, has proved to be fully adequate to all the needs of mankind. And this is the rock that may still and ever be justly termed impregnable.

VII.

After this review, it may now be time to sum up the situation, and also to seek a moment's refreshment in turning from topics more or less polemical to such as are practical.

The Holy Scriptures have for the last hundred years resembled a beleaguered town, with the shouts of the foeman and the roar of his artillery sounding round the walls. It would be most unjust, and not less absurd, to apply such a description, or anything approaching it, to a reverent criticism, however acute might be its vision, however searching its processes, or whatever effect they might have had in disintegrating the sacred volume. For the Bible must, on account of its human dress, come under literary treatment, and of that treatment truth, and not comfort or quietude, must be the aim. But the penetrating character of the diagnosis pursued by a skilled physician detracts nothing from the tenderness of his regard either for the character or the feelings of his patient; at least if, besides being a clever, he is also a judicious and right-minded man. Now, dividing roughly assailants from defenders, admitting fully, with respect to the modern critics that, until they show themselves otherwise, they are to be considered as assailants only of the form and not the spirit of the Bible, we may still ask whether their tone and temper, speaking generally, has been such, say, for example, in Germany, as the Christian community was entitled not only to desire but to demand? Have they proceeded under the influence of sentiment such as would govern one who was endeavoring either to wipe away external impurities or to efface spurious manipulations, from some great work of a famous artist? Not the mind only, but the finger also, of such a man is guided by tenderness and reverence throughout. And, in the case of the Holy Scriptures, to tenderness and reverence there should be added an ever-living sense of gratitude for the work which they have performed and are performing in the world. Has this been the prevailing and dominating spirit of the critical negations of the last half century? Sweeping judgments, in answer to such a question, are not to be delivered without breach of propriety and of charity, except by students both widely and accurately versed in the subject matter. A very limited acquaintance with the critical literature certainly does not show me, within my own narrow bounds, that the negative school carefully eschews precipitancy and levity; that it never seems to betray a desire for the negative conclusion rather than the affirmative; that it handles what it deems sick and sore

¹ I. Corinthians xiv, 29.

² Acts xxi, 10, 11.

³ Acts xxi, 30, *seq.*

places as children would deal with them in an afflicted parent; that reverence is the keynote of its tone.¹ Glad shall I be, if better informed and more competent judges be able to render a different and more satisfactory account.

But be this as it may, and however grave at the present day may be the general assault upon belief, with which Bible criticism ought to have nothing in common, the impression made upon me by the experience of life is that, wherever religion is alive, the Bible has not lost any of its power. I am not now contemplating its office as a corrector of error, as a tribunal of appeal upon soundness of doctrine and of practice, but am considering it entirely with reference to what may be termed its pastoral office; to that declaration of the Apostle which apprises us that all Scripture given by inspiration of God (I am now assuming that the lately revised English version has in this passage improved upon the old one) is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.² This was to Timothy, who from a child had known the Scriptures of the older covenant, which were able to make him "wise unto salvation"³—that is, unto hearty reception of the faith of Christ. And if the books of the Old Testament, laden with the several difficulties of which we hear so much, could accomplish so great a work, what must not be the wealth, and what the capabilities, of the Scriptures of the New Covenant, with their larger, brighter and more disentangled revelation?

I have referred to the vast multiplication of copies of the Sacred Scriptures through Bible societies and otherwise. If we turn to other portions of the Christian fold than those principally concerned with Bible societies, we must not forget to observe that free and full circulation of the Holy Scriptures was the rule and practice of the entire Christian Church, until in the course of the sixteenth century jealousies due to the controversies of the time produced, as it would appear, a change of policy in the Latin Church. I have myself purchased in Athens a cheap copy of the tract of Saint Chrysostom, in which he presses upon the laity the study of the Scriptures and contests the arguments of those indisposed to forward it. This tract was published with the countenance of the Archbishop. I also possess a beautiful copy of the Gospels and Acts, in a pocket size, printed at Venice in 1544, and another of the same character, also printed at Venice in 1536; both of them without note or comment. In truth, the amount of diffusion of the sacred volume from the era of the invention of printing down to the Reformation is even astonishing. They were translated and printed in almost every European tongue, except the Russian. Germany had no less than sixteen complete versions. In France the Versions and Epitomes, taken together, amounted to twenty. England lagged deplorably, and had nothing before Tyndale: for the great work of Wycliffe was never printed until half of the nineteenth century had gone by. We must hope that the appreciation of the teaching and feeding efficacy of the Bible is on the increase; and that any jealousies associated either with the grave difficulties of translation, or with the possibility that perverse minds may now treat the sacred books as the Epistles of Saint Paul were treated in the apostolic age, are being gradually abated. Why should the dutiful

¹ I do not know the latest American literature on the subject of the higher critics; but in Britain we have had two important though not bulky publications.

Sir W. Muir, Principal of Edinburgh University, the highest British authority on all that relates to the "origin" of the Mohammedan religion, arguing by analogy, with due circumspection and reserve, from his own comprehensive researches to the case of the Book of Deuteronomy, condemns the theory of Wellhausen as against all the evidence, and every likelihood of the case.

A still more direct thrust is administered by Dr. W. L. Baxter, the minister of a charge in St. Andrews. In some very concise tracts, bearing the title, "One God, One Sanctuary—Is Wellhausen Right?" he examines with apparently mereiless care and precision the contention of Wellhausen that the unification of the Hebrew religion at a single center was never heard of until the reign of Josiah, and was only after the Exile solidly and permanently established. He not only overthrows the doctrine and reduces it to dust, but appears to convict the critic of faults so gross as to suffice for destroying any literary or scientific reputation. This publication appeared in April, 1894. Unless and until it is answered, it seems to exclude any and every appeal to Wellhausen as an authority. (December, 1894.)

² II. Timothy iii, 16.

³ II. Timothy iii, 15.

perusal of the Bible raise any apprehension on behalf of the Church, or Kingdom of God, which is asserted with so much force in important portions of the Old Testament, and set forth, or presupposed, in almost every page of the New? Does it not seem that God has consigned to us a double witness in the living voice which proclaims that word throughout the world, and in the unalterable record which provides for maintaining the harmony of that living human voice with the divine purpose. Not, indeed, that the Bible has either converted the world, or saved Christianity from all error and corruption, any more than it has saved Christians from all sin. But, of the actual faith and love that subsist in the Christian heart, despite the world, the flesh, and the devil, who can doubt that, over and above the corrective action of the Bible, there is a vast portion due to the direct influence, most of all perhaps among English-speaking peoples, of its words upon hearts and life?

It may, perhaps, be excused, if, before concluding, and before touching on the application of the Holy Scriptures to the inward life of civilized man at large, I venture, not without diffidence, to offer a few words to the class of which I have been a member for more than three score continuous years; the class engaged in political employment, and invested with so considerable a power in governing the affairs, and in shaping the destinies, of mankind. In my own country I have observed that those who form this class have fallen under the influence of the negative or agnostic spirit of the day in a much smaller degree, than have some other classes. And, indeed, widening the scope of this observation, I would say, that the descriptions of persons who are habitually conversant with human motive, conduct, and concerns, are very much less borne down by scepticism than specialists of various kinds and those whose pursuits have associated them with the literature of fancy, with abstract speculation, or with the study, history, and framework of inanimate nature. So far, they are indeed happy in their lot. They are also to be congratulated on this, that the good they do has the privilege, as their evil deeds have the misfortune, of operating at once on the character, condition, and prospects, not of individuals only, but of large masses of their fellow creatures. They also enjoy a very great advantage, which, perhaps, they do not always duly appreciate, in the free and active, even if sometimes licentious, comments incessantly offered by the press and the public on their proceedings. More might be added in the same strain; but I forbear. Still, the distinctive features of their profession are not all of this rosy or favorable color. They are under peculiar temptations, not only to judge with undue severity the actions, but also to misconstrue and suspect the motives of those with whom they are in conflict or in contact. Both in self-defense and in the prosecution of their aims, which we may suppose to be generally lawful, they are open, in the choice of means, without any visible deviation from personal honor, to tamper in a thousand ways with their own essential integrity. Lastly, and all the more in proportion as they are men of reality and executive strength, they are liable, from the absorbing interest of their pursuit, and the imperious and, so to speak, domineering nature of its demands upon their faculties, to be reduced to a state of mental exhaustion, which, far more subtly than the mere want of leisure, deprives them of the mental energy necessary in order to discharge other difficult duties, or to face, and treat with searching judgment, complex or ensnaring problems or laborious inquiries.

It would appear, then, that they are called to a high but dangerous vocation, abounding in opportunities on the one hand and dangers on the other. The principle of probation, which applies to all men, has for them an application altogether peculiar, and they, even more than members of society in general, require to drink of that water, which whosoever drinketh of, he shall never thirst again.¹ The force of all these considerations is enhanced by the unequivocal tendency of the present, and probably, also, the coming time, both to multiply the functions of government and to carry them into regions formerly reserved to the understanding and

¹ John iv, 14.

conscience of the individual; so that their risks are greatly enhanced together with their rewards for fruitfulness in well doing. The alternative opened for them by the choice between good and evil is one of tremendous moment. True it is, that the New Testament deals in but scanty bulk with the specialties of their profession; but also true, that it sheds for their benefit a whole flood of light on the virtues of humility, charity, justice, and moral courage, without which their profession is a snare, and promises to them in its earnest and, if possible, systematic perusal the richest results of a happy experience.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." As they have lived and wrought, so they will live and work. From the teacher's chair and from the pastor's pulpit; in the humblest hymn that ever mounted to the ear of God from beneath a cottage roof, and in the rich, melodious choir of the noblest cathedral, "their sound is gone out into all lands and their words into the ends of the world."¹ Nor here alone but in a thousand silent and unsuspected forms will they unweariedly prosecute their holy office. Who doubts that, times without number, particular portions of Scripture find their way to the human soul as if embassies from on high, each with its own commission of comfort, of guidance, or of warning? What crisis, what trouble, what perplexity of life has failed or can fail to draw from this inexhaustible treasure-house its proper supply? What profession, what position is not daily and hourly enriched by these words which repetition never weakens, which carry with them now, as in the days of their first utterance, the freshness of youth and immortality? When the solitary student opens all his heart to drink them in, they will reward his toil. And in forms yet more hidden and withdrawn, in the retirement of the chamber, in the stillness of the night season, upon the bed of sickness, and in the face of death, the Bible will be there, its several words how often winged with their several and special messages, to heal and to soothe, to uplift and uphold, to invigorate and stir. Nay, more, perhaps, than this; amid the crowds of the court, or the forum, or the street, or the market place, when every thought of every soul seems to be set upon the excitements of ambition, or of business, or of pleasure, there too, even there, the still small voice of the Holy Bible will be heard, and the soul, aided by some blessed word, may find wings like a dove, may flee away and be at rest.

¹ Psalm xix, 4.

W. E. Gladstone

*Hawarden Castle
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Oct-7. 94*

BOOK I.

LITERATURE AND MANUSCRIPTS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

LITERATURE,

BY

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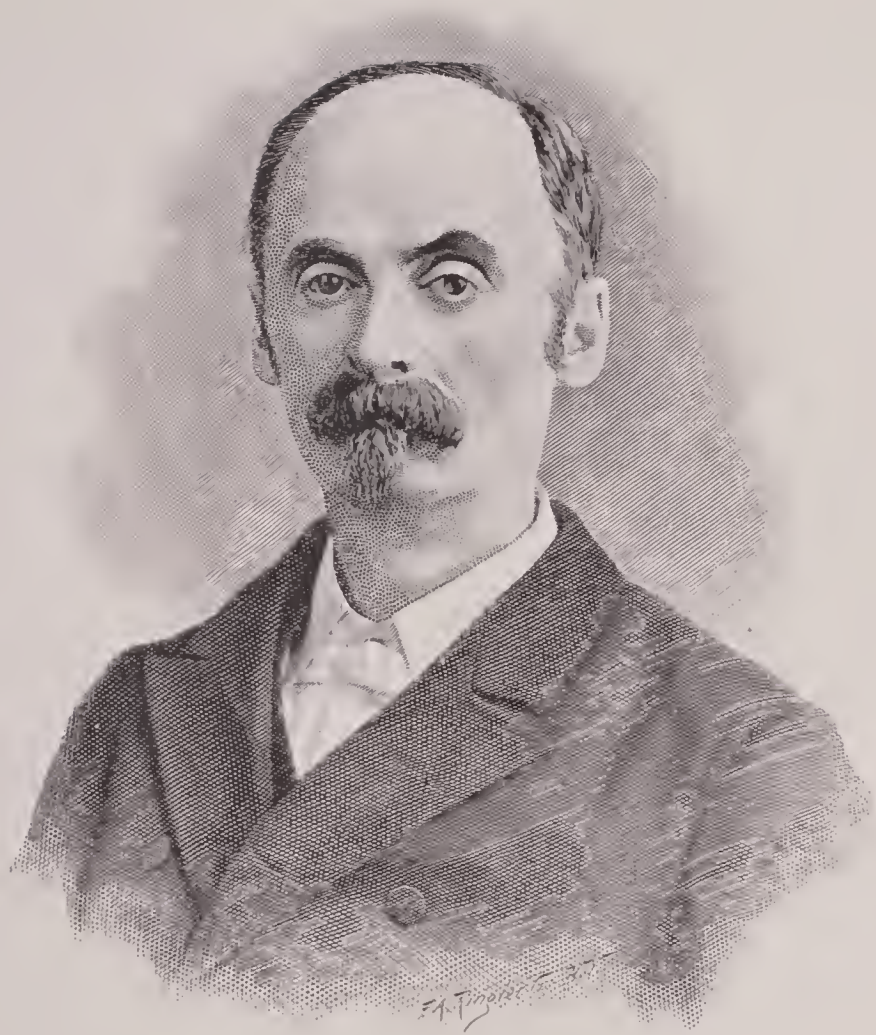
MANUSCRIPTS,

BY

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A. H. Sayce.

BOOK I.

LITERATURE AND MANUSCRIPT OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

LITERATURE, BY PROF. A. H. SAYCE.

I.

HISTORY is usually defined as the record of the past actions of mankind. But the definition is either too wide or too narrow. It is too wide, because it is the actions of civilized man only that come within the range of the historian. Uncivilized man has left behind him no chronicle of his deeds. The stone weapon or the unbaked potsherd may tell us how he lived, and the shape of his skull may determine his kinship in race, but of his history, in any sense which the term can properly bear, they can tell us nothing. The definition, again, is too narrow, in that history ought to be something more than a mere record of human actions. It ought to aim at showing how these actions have sprung one out of the other, what were the motives which underlay them, and what is the influence that they have had upon the world. It ought further to reproduce as in a picture the social life of a civilized community, and above all the religious feelings and beliefs which have animated it. History, in short, is not only a record of the past actions of civilized man; it is also a picture of civilized man himself. But it is civilized man, not as a single individual, but as part of a state or a community; and the actions it describes, the life it depicts, are the common actions and common life of a civilized body of men.

There are, however, various modes of writing history. A history may be either a mere chronicle of past events arranged in a chronological order, or it may attempt to show the necessary sequence and inner connection of these events and to find, as it were, a single thread running through them all, or finally it may dwell more on the social forces that have brought the events about than upon the events themselves. One historian may be more interested in the wars and the foreign relations of a nation than with the development of the people that compose it, while another may consider the external politics of a state of comparatively small importance and concentrate his attention to the social life that has existed within it. Or again a writer may make universal history his object rather than the history of particular nations, and marshal his facts with a view to their bearing on the general progress of civilization; or he may use history as a means of illustrating and enforcing some theory or doctrine, the events of the past being valuable to him only in so far as they seem to verify his views.

Few historians, indeed, are altogether free from the charge of suiting the facts of history to a preconceived theory. The first requisite of a historian is that he should be sympathetic, able to realize the life of the past and to sympathize with those who led it, and this almost necessarily compels him to take sides. The absolutely impartial historian is a man who keeps his feelings and sympathies in check, who holds his judgment in suspense, and regards every thing in "the dry light" of intellect. But we are emotional as well as intellectual beings, and the "impartial" historian is therefore apt to be dull. He does not carry us along with him in his pictures of the past; they have no life in them, and the men he describes are mere names or abstractions inhabiting a world that is not our own. Grote's "History of Greece," written

as it was to defend the author's theories of democracy, has wholly superseded the more intellectually accurate and sober-minded "History," of Thirlwall. Grote compels us to take sides for or against his heroes, and in so doing to realize the scenes and actions he describes.

Moreover, history which is absolutely "impartial" is likely to present us only with the dry bones of the past, and thus to fail of its real end and object. History in the true sense of the word must be a good deal more than dry bones; the skeleton must be clothed with flesh before it can represent in any real manner the past actions of mankind. A "colorless" narrative may be all very well in criticism, but it is like a beautiful landscape in a thick fog. History deals with the lives and actions of living men, and unless it can make them instinct with life we shall get but little profit out of it.

It is not needful that the historian should always be conscious of the bias with which his history is written, of the theory and doctrine which underlie it. It may be that what German writers call the "tendency" of his work is unrecognized even by himself. At other times the work may be written with a full and deliberate consciousness of the moral to which it points. The author may set out with the intention of showing how history, when rightly interpreted, is a parable for our instruction, and how its lessons agree with the doctrines he wishes to inculcate. Such a use of history varies in degree from the discreetly veiled purpose of Gibbon to trace in the fall of the Roman empire the effects of Christianity down to the employment of the parable, where a fact of history may be taken to convey an ethical or religious lesson. The Jews of the Talmudic period specially delighted in employing history, or supposed history, in this way. In their hands what was termed Haggadah underwent a great development. History was transmuted into homiletic teaching, with the inevitable result that little care was taken as to whether the history were true or false. For homiletic purposes a legend was as serviceable as a narrative of actual facts—perhaps even more serviceable. It was not as history, but as a vehicle for conveying religious and moral truth, that the story was valuable, and so long, therefore, as religious and moral truth was conveyed, it mattered little whether it were also an exact relation of fact.

II.

This brings us to the question of the truth of history. Nowadays everybody allows that history ought to be a true record of facts, and that if it is untrustworthy it should not be regarded as history at all. The chief object which historical criticism has set before itself is to determine what portions of the history which has come down to us we may believe and what we ought to reject, and whether the documents in which the history is embodied are worthy of credit or not. An ancient book may be excellent reading, but if the statements contained in it are incorrect we cannot regard it as historical.

But the actual amount of error which is permissible in a historical work is much more difficult to settle. No human work can be perfect, much less a work on history. Even to-day we have only to read the newspapers in order to see how hard it is to learn the exact truth about the occurrences which are taking place, as it were, before our very eyes. It is a common experience in courts of law for thoroughly honest witnesses to contradict one another about simple matters of fact; how much more difficult must it be to arrive at the exact truth where the facts are no longer simple and where the passions and prejudices of numbers of men are involved! It is impossible for any historian to be sure that all his facts are correct. He has to depend upon human testimony, and human testimony is eminently fallible. Equally impossible is it for him to be certain that the inferences and conclusions which he draws from the facts are just. Even if the facts themselves are right, they still cannot be the whole of the facts. The historical record is necessarily imperfect; we can know it only in part, and the complexion we give to it must be imperfect also.

It is important to bear this in mind. Books have been written of late which seem to demand from the historians of the past a mathematical exactitude which the nature of the case renders impossible. All that we can require from a historical document is an honest account of what was known to the writer of it, and from the historian who makes use of the document a similarly honest representation of its statements. So long as the main facts are faithfully narrated we need not trouble ourselves about the accuracy of unimportant details. A document may be perfectly trustworthy, even though the critic can detect in it minor errors and inconsistencies. The sun does not shine less brightly upon the earth because there are spots upon its face.

Of course, it makes a considerable difference to the credibility of a narrative whether or not it was written down at the time when the events recorded in it actually occurred. Written testimony is better than oral testimony, and history when handed down by oral tradition alone is apt to become legendary. Where the history of an event has been embodied in contemporaneous literature we may feel assured it cannot be very wide of the truth.

The history of the past, or rather the documents in which that history has been preserved, can be verified in various ways. Chief among these ways is archæological discovery. Time after time it has happened that ancient monuments have been found which confirm the statements made in some old record. Our own century has been beyond all others fruitful in such verifications. The East—the home of early civilization—has been yielding up its dead, and the decipherer has made them speak once more in living tones. First Egypt, then Assyria and Babylonia, and lastly the other lands of Western Asia and the Ægean Sea have been revealing their buried secrets and bringing a world to light the very memory of which has been well-nigh forgotten. The men of Egypt among whom the Israelites sojourned so long, the Assyrian monarchs who overthrew the kingdom of Samaria and demanded homage from Judah, the Babylonian conqueror who destroyed Jerusalem, can now be known and studied face to face. The Egyptian tombs have told us of the daily life and thoughts and beliefs of the subjects of the Pharaohs, the clay tablets of Nineveh have proved to be the relics of a richly stocked library, and we can read the very words which Nebuchadnezzar caused to be inscribed in honor of his god, or in which Cyrus described his conquest of Babylonia.

For the records of the Old Testament such archæological discoveries are of inestimable value. Hitherto these records have stood alone, or almost alone; there was nothing with which to compare them, nothing whereby their statements could be checked or confirmed; and a free hand was consequently given to the critic to deal with them as he would. Now all this is changed, and one of the first and most important results of the discoveries which have been pouring in upon us during the last few years is the proof that Canaan was a land of readers and writers long before the Israelites entered it, and that the Mosaic age was one of high literary activity. So far as the use of writing is concerned, there is now no longer any reason for doubting that the earlier books of the Bible might well have been contemporaneous with the events they profess to record.

It is a long space of years that is covered by the books of the Old Testament—a still longer space that is covered by the history they contain. But it is a history through which runs a continuous thread of connection, binding its several links into a single chain. It has been said by a German thinker that the ultimate result of a philosophy of history is to show how God has worked in and upon men, guiding and educating them toward a fuller and truer revelation of himself and of his relations to them. If this is the end and object of a philosophy of history, then it is a philosophy of history which is to be found in the Old Testament. We are led up by it through the Law to the Prophets, and Prophecy dies with the Gospel on its lips.

III.

The Book of Genesis sets before us the dawn of civilized life. Adam or "Man" has come to know what is good and what is evil, and must henceforth depend on his newly-gained knowledge in his struggle for existence in the world. Hardly has he left Paradise behind him when the arts and sciences take their start, and man learns that if he would rise above the level of the brute he must wring from nature her secrets and her bounties with the sweat of the brow. But his civilization is external only; his inner being is unaffected by it; and the luxury and conveniences with which he has surrounded himself serve merely to lead him farther away from his Creator and to give him greater opportunities for crime. "The wickedness of man was great in the earth"; so the flood came and swept it away. From the heights of Ararat a single family descended to people once more the purified land of Asia and to hand on the traditions of the past.

It is around Babylon in the plain of Shinar that the records of post-diluvian man first gather. The beginnings of a history which was to end with the establishment of the Christian Church are on the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates. Here was the starting-point of the civilization and culture which spread through Western Asia and had so powerful an influence, first upon the people of Canaan and then upon their Hebrew conquerors. Here, too, the Semitic race to which the Hebrews belonged first acquired the elements of art and learning and founded the earliest Semitic power the world had seen.

This art and learning had been the creation of a race which was not Semitic. The inventors of the cuneiform system of writing, the builders of the great cities of Babylonia, the pioneers of Asiatic civilization were a people who spoke an agglutinative language like that of the modern Turks or Finns. They have been called Sumerians and Akkadians by scholars; what they called themselves we do not precisely know. But they were the teachers of those Semitic tribes who had settled in their neighborhood and who soon exchanged the life of shepherds for that of traders and merchants in the large towns. A time came when the Semite was predominant in the land, and Sargon of Akkad, in the gray dawn of history, not only made himself supreme in Babylonia, but carried his victorious arms to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The populations of Western Asia were fused into a single empire from the mountains of Elam in the east as far as "the land of the Amorites"—or Syria and Palestine—in the west. Naram-Sin, the son of Sargon, extended yet farther the limits of his father's kingdom. He marched his armies along the road afterward trodden by Chedorlaomer, and subdued "the country of Magan," the Midian and Sinaitic peninsula of later days. Here the Chaldean conqueror found himself confronted by another great civilized power which had arisen on the banks of the Nile. The two civilizations met and joined hands together, and from henceforth that corner of the globe which has been the scene of the most momentous events of biblical history was permeated by the civilizing influences that flowed alike from both.

But the influence of Babylonia largely exceeded that of Egypt. Shut up within her wall of deserts, Egypt was too self-contained to care about spreading her gifts of knowledge and culture very widely. Babylonia, on the other hand, naturally looked westward. Its great road of commerce ran through Harran—"the high road"—toward the Mediterranean; eastward were only the inhospitable mountains of Elam and Kurdistan, with unknown hordes of barbarians beyond. Moreover, though the empire of Sargon of Akkad passed away, the memory of it was never forgotten. Up to the age of Abraham the kings of Babylonia claimed also to be rulers of Palestine. And the claim had a foundation in fact, as is now clear from the cuneiform tablets which have been found at Tel el-Amarna in Upper Egypt. They prove that the influence of Babylonian culture upon Canaan and the rest of Western Asia had been deep and lasting. Everywhere the cuneiform system of writing had been adopted, with its cumbrous and

complicated syllabary; everywhere, too, was the Babylonian language taught and learned, and the Babylonian literature studied. Babylonian traditions and beliefs penetrated to the frontiers of Egypt, and the deities of Babylonia were worshiped in the cities of Canaan. The empire of Sargon of Akkad, which had been won by force of arms, was succeeded by the more enduring empire of Babylonian civilization and ideas.

It was in the midst of the civilization and culture of Babylonia that Abraham was born. The road he was summoned to traverse to the west had already been traversed by Babylonian generals, officials and merchants. Between Ur, his birthplace, and Harran, his half-way resting station, there was a special bond of union. Ur was the chief seat of the worship of the Babylonian Moon-god; its other chief seat was Harran. The worship of the god had been carried to Harran by the Babylonians, and the temple in which it was carried on there had been founded by them. In passing to Harran, therefore, the family of the Hebrew patriarch would still have found itself in familiar scenes and among its friends. It was not there, accordingly, that it was destined to dwell. The nations which should spring from Abraham were to have their habitation farther west, farther away from the influences of Babylonian polytheism and the allurements of Babylonian life.

But we must never forget that Babylonia thus forms the background of the history of the patriarchs and therewith of Israelitish history. The Ur in which Abraham was born, the Harran in which he dwelt for a while, the Canaan in which his body rested, were all alike in the possession of the same culture, the same literature, and the same script. The civilization in the midst of which he had been brought up met him equally in that distant land of the West to which he had gone. Even the language of his boyhood was known to the educated classes of the country of his adoption.

One of the first acts he was called upon to perform in his new home was to help in resisting a Babylonian invasion. The acceptance of Babylonian culture did not imply an equally ready acceptance of Babylonian rule on the part of the native princes of Canaan. And in quitting Ur, Abraham had left behind him his Babylonian citizenship. In Canaan he became as one of the Canaanites, fighting their battles for them and paying tithes out of the spoil to the priest-king of Jerusalem.

God's call had come to Abraham in Harran, but it was not until he had reached the Promised Land that a divine covenant was made with him. Now for the first time it was declared that Palestine should pass into the hands of that chosen seed of the patriarch in whom all the earth would be blessed. The civilization and conquests of Babylonia had prepared the way for the announcement of the promise; but a long period of time had yet to elapse before the promise could be fulfilled. One by one the descendants of Abraham had to be tried and sifted, before the one selected line could be finally established; Ishmaelites, Arabs of the South, and Edomites might claim kinship with the chosen race, but it was not for them that the divine covenant had been made. Had the Israelites been as their kinsfolk there would have been no Law and no Prophets, no Jewish Church, no Messianic hope. Modern science teaches us that a race improves through a process of natural selection; so, too, through a process of divine selection, the Israelitish people were set apart for the work they were intended to fulfill.

IV.

It has long been the fashion to speak of Abraham and the other patriarchs as Bedouin sheiks. But the comparison gives a wholly wrong idea of what they really were. There are Bedouin sheiks, indeed, who spend the larger part of their lives in towns, and are as civilized and cultured as the generality of their neighbors. It is not, however, of men like these that the writer and reader usually think when they describe Abraham as a "great Bedouin chief." It

is rather of the half-civilized nomad, who lives by rapine and the precarious products of his flocks, whose natural home is in the desert, and who is free from the restraints of civilized life. Such a conception of the Hebrew patriarchs would be wholly incorrect. They lived, it is true, for the most part in tents; they moved from one part of the country to the other; but they were in no sense uncivilized wanderers. They were brought up in the very midst of Babylonian culture and lived among those who were thoroughly imbued with it. Their home was in Canaan or at the court of the Pharaoh, not in the desert among the wild Amalekites. Such civilization and culture as were possessed by the inhabitants of Ur and Haran or by the people of Canaan they must have possessed also.

The extent of this civilization and culture we are but just beginning to realize. Long before the days of Abraham, Babylonia was a land of libraries and schools, of art and science, of law and settled government. A code of morals had been formed and an elaborate religion organized by the state. This religion was an amalgamation of the religious beliefs of the older Sumerian population and those of their Semitic successors. But the higher and more spiritual ideas of the Semite dominated it, and as time went on it came more and more to center round the doctrine which saw in the sun the visible symbol of the supreme Baal. Babylon became a holy city such as Rome was in the Middle Ages; it was under the control of a high priest, the Babylonian state being regarded as a theocracy at the head of which was Bel-Merodach, the god of Babylon. The ritual was elaborate and costly; tithes were required to be paid by every Babylonian to the temples of his gods, and sacred books existed which may be compared with our Bible and Prayer-book. The bible consisted of a collection of hymns to the gods, and penitential psalms, and they were considered so sacred that the mere mispronunciation of a word in their public recitation was held to invalidate the ceremony and even incur the anger of heaven. The prayer-book also contained the hymns, together with rubrical directions for their use as well as for the performance of the sacrifices and offerings and other acts of worship required in the daily services.

We cannot study the religious literature which has been preserved in the cuneiform tablets without feeling that the Babylonian was genuinely pious. But he was beset by superstitions of all kinds, and he added gods and goddesses innumerable. Nevertheless, there were those who in the midst of the darkness of polytheism were seeking "the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him." Now and again we meet with hymns in which language is used that shows how, for the moment, the deity who is addressed was exclusively and alone in the writer's thought, and how near he had come to a perception of the truth. Thus, in a hymn which was composed in Ur itself, Abraham's birthplace, probably long before he was born there, the Moon-god is addressed as follows: "Father, long-suffering and full of forgiveness, whose hand upholds the life of all mankind! . . . Firstborn, omnipotent, whose heart is immensity, and there is none who may fathom it! . . . In heaven, who is supreme? Thou alone, thou art supreme! In earth, who is supreme? Thou alone, thou art supreme!" Indeed there are indications that a school existed which sought to resolve the numerous deities of Babylonian theology into forms or manifestations of the Sky-god Anu, and in the penitential psalms we find expressions which prove that a sense of sin was present to the Babylonian heart. "O Lord," we read in one of them, "my sins are many, my transgressions are great! . . . I sought for help and none took my hand. I wept and none stood at my side; I cried aloud and there was none that heard me. To my God, the merciful one, I turn myself, I utter my prayer. . . . O my God, seven times seven are my transgressions: forgive my sins!"

Such was the religious atmosphere in which the boyhood of the Hebrew patriarch must have been passed. On the one side gross superstition, idolatry and polytheism, but on the other side glimpses of a purer light and of a more spiritual faith. Babylonian culture was feeling its way toward monotheism and a recognition that true religion must be spiritual and not material.

It already acknowledged the divine government of the world, the existence of a creator and a benefactor of men. Nay, more even than this; there are hymns in which Bel-Merodach is spoken of as "the compassionate god, who raises the dead to life." Here, then, in these religious aspirations of Babylonian culture, lay the preparation for God's revelation of himself to Abraham. In the culture of Chaldea we must see the educating forces which molded the mind of the Hebrew patriarch. It was only when their work had been accomplished and the new revelation had been made to Abraham that he was bidden to tear himself away from his older associations and remove to a land and a mode of life where they were the less likely to influence him.

V.

The patriarchal age of Hebrew history ends with the migration of Jacob and his sons into Egypt. It was now time for the other great civilizing power of the ancient East to exercise its influence upon the chosen people. But this influence was negative rather than positive. Egypt was the furnace of trial through which Israel had to pass before it was fitted for its future part in the world; the house of bondage which should make it value and cherish the blessings of freedom. Egyptian luxury and Egyptian idolatry were henceforth associated with the idea of slavery; it was rarely, if ever, that they henceforth had attractions for the Israelitish people. Toward Egyptian culture and religion the feeling of the Israelites was that of antagonism, of repulsion rather than of the reverse. Doubtless Moses had been the adopted son of an Egyptian princess and was learned in all the wisdom of Egypt, but it was their wisdom that he utilized, not their beliefs and practices, their religious customs and social life. How marked, for instance, is the contrast between the stern insistence of the Mosaic law upon the duties of this life and the continual living for the world to come which characterized Egyptian civilization! With all his light-heartedness, the Egyptian had ever before him the image of death; the Mosaic law scarcely looks beyond the rewards and punishments which await the good and the evil in this present world.

Perhaps there was a racial as well as a historical and religious reason for this attitude of antagonism between the "dwellers on the Nile" and their fugitive bondsmen. Unlike the Babylonians, the Egyptians did not belong to the same Semitic race as the Israelites, and between Egypt and Asia there had long been feud. The wall of isolation within which Egypt had once entrenched herself had long since been broken down, and before Joseph became the prime minister of the Pharaoh the valley of the Nile had been overrun and conquered by Asiatic invaders. The foreign domination lasted for several centuries. Then came the war of independence, and the founder of the eighteenth dynasty succeeded in expelling the last of the strangers from the soil of his country. A war of revenge was next carried on against Asia, and under Thothmes III. and his successors Canaan became an Egyptian province and the boundaries of the Egyptian empire were pushed as far as the Euphrates. But the conquest of Western Asia reacted upon the conquerors. The Pharaohs married Asiatic princesses and became half-Asiatic themselves. Amenophis IV., or Khu-n-Aten, eventually surrounded himself with Canaanitish and Syrian officials and endeavored to force an Asiatic form of faith upon his unwilling subjects. The worship of the Solar Disk, the symbol of the Asiatic Baal, was substituted for that of the Theban Amon, and the quarrel between the Pharaoh and the Egyptian priests grew so acute that Khu-n-Aten deserted the capital of his fathers and built himself a new city farther north. It was on the site of this new capital, now known as Tel el-Amarna, that the cuneiform tablets were discovered to which allusion has already been made. They consist for the most part of letters from the allied princes and Egyptian governors in Asia, and show that even at the court of the Pharaoh the language and script of Babylonia were the medium of diplomatic intercourse.

The religious reforms of Khu-n-Aten ended in civil war and the fall of the eighteenth dynasty. The Egyptian empire in Asia fell at the same time, though the larger portion of Canaan was recovered by the earlier kings of the nineteenth dynasty. Foremost among these was Rameses II., whom the discoveries of Mr. Naville at Pithom have shown to have been the Pharaoh of the oppression.

We have learned from the tablets of Tel el-Amarna why "the new king which knew not Joseph" should have dealt so hardly with the Hebrew people. The rise of the nineteenth dynasty marks the success of the national uprising against the Asiatic policy of the later kings of the eighteenth. The native Egyptians had looked on with smothered indignation while the posts about the court had been handed over to the hated foreigner; when the ancient religion of the country was proscribed they broke into open revolt. All the old feelings of hostility to the Semitic stranger were aroused afresh, and the triumph of the national party meant the expulsion of the Asiatic and his religion from the valley of the Nile. Those who remained were enslaved or exterminated.

While Rameses lived there was no hope for the suffering bondsmen. They were kept incessantly at work on the cities and buildings with which he filled the land of Egypt during his long reign of sixty-seven years. But with his death there came a change. Egypt had to stand the shock of an invasion by northern and western nations, and the nineteenth dynasty grew weaker every year. The opportunity for escape arrived at last, and the Israelites under their leader, Moses, plunged into the desert, there to be formed into a nation and made ready for the conquest of Canaan.

In Egypt they had been in close and intimate contact with one of the most literary of peoples. From time immemorial the Egyptian had known how to read and write. The walls of his tombs and temples were covered with lines of writing; even the ornaments he wore and the objects of his toilet were inscribed with words and names. At times the cartouches of the Pharaohs were stamped upon the mud bricks their bondsmen were bidden to mold, and the rocks and monuments that still remain are thick with the scrawls of passers-by. The contrast between Nubia and Egypt in this respect is striking; go where you will in Egypt inscriptions stare you in the face; in Nubia, on the other hand, they are few and far between. The scribe was the honored of all men; the children of the Pharaoh did not disdain to adopt the profession, and it led, as in modern China, to the highest offices of state. Schools and teachers must have been multiplied all over the land, and the papyri which have been left to us prove how large and how ancient must have been the literature of the country in the truest sense of the word.

The land toward which the Israelitish fugitives bent their steps was equally a land of literature. The tablets of Tel el-Amarna have told us so. There, too, in Canaan, writers and readers abounded; there, too, were schools and libraries, though the script was that of Babylonia and not of Egypt, and the literary language was a foreign one. Even in the desert itself, if the latest researches of Glaser and Hommel are justified, they could not have been altogether beyond that literary atmosphere which in the age of the Exodus enveloped the whole of Western Asia. Alphabetic writing in the Arabian peninsula seems to be older than the days of Moses. There was a cultured kingdom in the south whose kings claimed sway as far as the borders of Egypt and Edom, and who held control over the great caravan road of trade. Their inscriptions have been found near Teima in the northwest, not very far distant from the region in which some part of the wanderings of the Israelites was passed.

But even if the views of Glaser and Hommel turn out to be incorrect, it would make no difference to the general fact that Moses and his followers lived in a literary age and in the very midst of literary nations. That they should have been unacquainted with the art of writing would have been nothing short of a miracle. How could they alone have been slumbering, while the peoples around them were all awake? We must, accordingly, regard the influence of



TEL-EL-AMARNA TABLET.

Egypt upon Israel as not entirely negative. It had also its positive side. The "wisdom of the Egyptians" was preëminently a literary wisdom, and the Israelites, when they fled from Egypt, must have carried away with them a knowledge of writing and the conception of a literature.

VI.

The desert was the cradle of the Mosaic law. There the fugitive slaves of Pharaoh were organized into a nation, and for the first time were made to understand that they were henceforth to be the chosen people of the Lord. The covenant made with the patriarchs now found its realization in the covenant made with the nation that had sprung from them. The individual had given place to the community, and the history of the Old Testament enters upon a new stage. From henceforth the individual falls into the background; he is merely the representative of the people; and God's dealings are with the people rather than with the single man. The patriarchal age has disappeared forever; the great figures that henceforth cross the stage of Hebrew history — Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David — are but the leaders and representatives of the community behind them. The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob has become a national God, and the patriarchal household has developed into a theocracy.

It is always so in history. It begins with individuals; it ends with nations and communities. Not that "the great man," as he is termed, is ever dispensed with; but the social forces upon which he works grow wider and more complicated; he is more largely acted upon by them, and his own influence is more difficult to determine. He no longer stands forth like an isolated peak; there are innumerable mountain ranges behind him as far as the eye can reach, and the historian must take account of them all.

Among the many lessons learned in the desert, perhaps the chiefest was that Israel was one united nation, a peculiar people singled out of all mankind for the revelation of the unity of God. Other nations were divided into principalities and smaller states, each with its own worship and its own supreme deity, and when these principalities and states came to be united together, the union of their several worships and divinities produced those polytheistic state-religions which we find in Egypt, in Canaan, or in Babylonia. But the tribes of Israel were formed into a single whole, with a common law, a common worship, and a common belief in the one supreme God, before they had settled in the Promised Land and could there become a state. The theocracy already existed while they were still but a wandering caravan, necessarily subject to the control and discipline of a single leader. When at last they entered Canaan and settled in the country which had been promised to their fathers they were already a corporate body, with a definite organization and a definite faith. Israel was no amalgamation of townships and petty states, but an organized community whose tribes recognized the same priesthood, the same laws, and the same beliefs.

The desert, consequently, made Israel not only a nation, but an undivided nation. And with the feeling of national unity came a confidence in its own powers. The slaves of Pharaoh, who could not be led along the way of the Philistines lest they "should see war," soon became those hardy warriors who first defeated and scattered the Amalekite Bedouin and then invaded the cities of Canaan. Along with freedom and discipline had come strength and the power of united action.

But it needed time to prepare the people for their appointed task. And meanwhile the way was being made ready in Canaan itself. The wars of Rameses II. against the Hittites had carried ruin and devastation through the Canaanitish cities. The Hittites who had descended from the mountains of the north in the closing days of the eighteenth dynasty had taken secure possession of Syria and had established themselves at Kadesh on the Orontes, in the land of the Amorites, not far from the future frontier of Palestine. The campaigns of Rameses II. and his

father checked their further advance. But the struggle between the two powers lasted for many years, and though the Egyptian Pharaoh conquered Canaan and even extended his influence to the eastern side of the Jordan, it must have been an exhausted province which he finally possessed. In the troubles which followed the reign of Rameses, Canaan was again lost to Egypt and never subsequently recovered. But other invaders were at hand. When Rameses III., of the nineteenth dynasty, was on the Egyptian throne, Palestine was overrun by hordes of barbarians, from the *Ægean* Sea and the coasts of Asia Minor, who swarmed southward both by sea and land. Some of them remained permanently in the country, the southern part of which was afterward invaded by the Egyptian Pharaoh after his complete victory over the northern foe.

But the work of destruction begun by the wars of Rameses II. must have been completed by the invaders from the north. The inhabitants of Canaan could have had but little strength to resist the Israelitish invasion, when Joshua at last led the tribes across the Jordan. Little by little the larger part of the country was subdued.

The Book of Judges, however, makes it clear that the work of conquest was not a rapid one. Indeed, it was not until the age of the kings that some of the most important of the Canaanitish cities fell into Israelitish hands. Jerusalem, the future capital of Judah, was one of the early conquests of David, and it was not until the reign of Solomon that Gezer, in spite of its strategical value, was given by the Egyptian Pharaoh to the Hebrew king. The age of the Judges was an age of fighting and disorder. The civilization of Canaan retrograded, and each man did that which was right in his own eyes. Invasion followed upon invasion, servitude upon servitude, so that "the highways were unoccupied" and the Israelitish warriors deprived of their arms. The disorganization of the tribes seemed at times complete; the law of Moses was forgotten and "they chose new gods." Nevertheless, with all this disorder and disorganization, Israel never wholly forgot the lesson it had learned in the wilderness. It never wholly lost the consciousness that it was one people under one national God, and in moments of distress it realized the fact. Time after time the tribes rallied round some patriotic leader, and acknowledged both their own unity and their common faith. The state of Canaan after the Israelitish conquest is paralleled by the state of Europe after the fall of the Roman empire. In Europe, too, there were war and discord, loss of culture and political disorganization, and in Europe, also, there was one stable and unifying element—the Christian Church—which eventually brought order out of chaos, and peace out of anarchy.

But it was manifest that the Hebrew people were not yet fitted for a purely theocratic government. They required a visible head, who should lead them in war against their enemies and decide their quarrels at home. The epoch of the Judges was fast passing into an epoch of disintegration. The Philistines had overrun all the south of Palestine, and now held the passes which commanded the approach to the north. It seemed as if the name of Israel was about to be wiped out, all its previous training to end in nothing. When the ark was captured by the enemy, all hope seemed to be gone.

The Judges had failed. A strong hand was needed to resist the hostile forces that were threatening to destroy Israel from without and to harmonize the jarring elements that were threatening to destroy it from within. Saul was elected king, and Samuel, the last of the Judges, became the first of the Prophets. The assertion of individual right and influence which had manifested itself in the stormy scenes of the period of the Judges was now disciplined into a better and more spiritual path. Though it was the pressure of hostile attack which had forced Israel to cry out for a king, yet underneath that cry lay an instinctive feeling that only so could Israel be molded into a single nation, animated by a common spirit and seeking a common end. The unity that had been realized in the desert in the person of the lawgiver could only be realized in Canaan in the person of a king.

With the rise of the royal power Israel once more comes into contact with the great nations of the ancient world. David created an empire which reached to the Euphrates, and Solomon made alliance with the Pharaoh of Egypt. The fall of the empire brought with it the foundation of the kingdom of Damascus and was followed by the revolt of the ten tribes. The revolt proved how useless was the attempt to unify Israel by political means only; the real bond of unity was religious, not political. But several centuries were needed for the recognition of this truth, and when at last it was recognized, the Israel which received it was but a fragment of the political Israel of the past.

The wars and alliances with Damascus led to the interference of Assyria in the affairs of Samaria and Judah. Assyria had now taken the place once occupied in Western Asia by Babylonia. It was the leading state of the civilized Asiatic world. Its monarchs claimed to be the ministers of their god Assur, sent forth by him to punish the disobedient and to compel all mankind to acknowledge his supremacy. From the ninth century onward their campaigns led them to the west. Here, rather than among the rude mountaineers of the east and north, was booty to be gained, and the roads of trade opened up for the merchants of Nineveh. Damascus stood between them and the shores of the Mediterranean, and its kings had consequently to bear the brunt of their attacks.

Already Jehu had paid tribute to the great king of Assyria, and the Israelitish envoys are depicted on the obelisk of black marble which now stands in the British Museum. But it was not until the rise of the second Assyrian empire under Tiglath-Pileser III., in B. C. 747, that the entire destruction of Syrian and Palestinian political independence was attempted. Tiglath-Pileser inaugurated a new system of policy which was ably carried out by himself and his successors. He set himself to form a great empire which should include all the countries of the civilized world, as well as Egypt, and of which the Assyrian king should be the absolute head. It was to be a great corporate body, with a highly centralized government, the like of which the world had never seen before. In order to carry out his plans, Tiglath-Pileser created a standing army, as perfectly equipped and disciplined as the age allowed it to be. It soon became an irresistible instrument of conquest; none could stand against the veterans of Assyria and the skilled generals who commanded them. One by one the states and cities of Western Asia fell under the iron power of Assyria; Assyrian savages, accountable to the king, were placed over them, and all spirit of disaffection or patriotism in the conquered populations was sought to be crushed by their transportation to distant parts of the empire. Assyrian garrisons and colonists watched over the fidelity of such of the older inhabitants as were permitted to remain in their homes, and an army of Assyrian officials managed the affairs of the mighty empire and constituted a check upon the military commanders.

Such was the power which destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel and threatened to overthrow that of Judah. But the kingdom of Judah had not yet accomplished its mission. Sennacherib's host dashed in vain against the walls of Jerusalem, and the danger which had threatened it passed away. Hezekiah and his people were saved, and when Manasseh subsequently returned to allegiance to Assyria a wiser and more conciliatory ruler than Sennacherib was on the throne of Nineveh, and there was no longer any desire to blot out the Jewish name.

Assyria fell as suddenly as it had risen to power, and for a few short years the possession of Syria and Palestine was disputed between Egypt and Babylonia. Judah suffered in the conflict between the two powers, and when Babylonia prevailed its kings still deluded themselves with the hope of preserving their independence by playing off the one power against the other. The hope was futile, and it was not long before Jerusalem was captured and overthrown, the temple burned, the priests and people carried into exile, and the kingdom of David extinct.

But the work of the monarchy was done. That portion of the Israelitish people which made up the kingdom of Judah had been forced into a single community. Four centuries of

common national life under the line of David had made them a united whole. Little by little the divisions — religious, political and social — which had existed among them had been smoothed away. Judah, Simeon, Benjamin, and Levi had become a homogeneous state, with a single center and a single head. The religious worship which had been carried on at the various “high places” of the country, the ancient centers of religious veneration, had been suppressed, and concentrated once for all in the temple at Jerusalem. The “holy city” of Jerusalem had, as it were, absorbed all the other holy places which had once existed in southern Palestine. And with this concentration of worship went a realization of the unity of the national God and of the relation of the nation toward him such as had never been possible before. Judah had become a self-contained unity, both in religion and in politics.

VII.

Side by side with this religious and political concentration, and, in fact, under the shadow and protection of it, prophecy grew up and extended its influence. As we have seen, the creation of the royal power was the signal for the judge to pass into the prophet. Already in the reigns of the first kings of Israel we find the prophet taking his place at the side of the monarch as guide and counselor, friend and critic. It is he to whom the king appeals for counsel in moments of political difficulty; it is he who alone can venture to rebuke the sovereign, and who can make and unmake kings. It is he, lastly, who becomes the chronicler of the kingdom, and the people’s schoolmaster. He is, in fact, the externalized conscience of the prince, whose autocracy would otherwise be checked only by revolt and revolution, the representative alike of the Lord and of the Lord’s people.

In prophecy, however, as in all things else, there was development and progress. As time went on, its voice grew clearer and more definite. The morality that it preached became more catholic and more spiritual. Its vision ceased to be confined within the narrow horizon of a single nation, and began to embrace all mankind. And with enlargement of its vision came also an enlargement in its ideas of time. It was no longer the immediate present or the immediate future which it contemplated, but the far-reaching ages that were yet to come. The appeal to the sight made way for an appeal to the ear and the mind. The sign and wonder were superseded by the still small voice which was indeed the voice of God. The earthly line and throne of David faded away into the larger lineaments of the kingdom of Christ.

It was only in Judah and in the later days of the Jewish monarchy that Hebrew prophecy thus attained the full realization of its mission. Not until the Jewish nation had learnt to feel that they were one people, separate from all others, were they ready to receive the final revelation of prophecy. It was needful that they should first gather round the earthly Jerusalem and the temple of Solomon, with its priesthood and its services, before they could be taught that all these were, after all, but types and symbols, and that the stately cult of the Jewish ritual was but a veil which hid behind it the more spiritual cult of the heart. If the law was a schoolmaster to bring the world to Christ, the Jewish monarchy was equally the schoolmaster which enabled prophecy to deliver its full message to an understanding people.

And yet it was a message hard to understand. It was a new gospel for men to hear. A high code of morals had been preached in Egypt from the earliest times, and the soul of the dead man was required to satisfy the stern judges of the other world that he had fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and wronged no man. But this code of morals was supplementary only to the external forms of religion. The slightest departure from the prescribed formula of the religious ceremonies would have been more fatal than inability to answer the judges of the dead, and a belief in the dogmas of the orthodox faith was more necessary than the most perfect performance of the moral law. In Assyria and Babylonia, again, the correct fulfillment of the

requirements of the ritual constituted the very essence of religion. Assur of Nineveh and Bel-Merodach of Babylon were local divinities and had therefore to be treated like earthly kings. What they saw and what they demanded was mere outward propriety of conduct and worship; the worship of the heart was an almost meaningless phrase. We look in vain elsewhere than in Israel for that keynote of prophecy which finds its expression in the first chapter of the Book of Isaiah. The God of Israel required a pure heart and a holy life, not a ceaseless round of sacrifices and rites or the most gorgeous temple that man had ever reared.

The message of prophecy was enforced by national suffering. When Isaiah delivered it, there were few who could as yet understand what it meant. But the century which followed brought with it many bitter experiences, and imprinted its lesson on the minds of the better portion of the Jewish people. Doubtless the majority still clung to their old localizing faith, and believed up to the last that their God would never suffer his temple to fall into the hands of the foe. There were many, however, who had come to know that true and vital religion does not depend on the accidents of space and time. With ever-increasing clearness the prophets had declared that unless the nation repented inwardly as well as outwardly their sanctuary should be desecrated and forsaken, and that the true Israel should survive in a faithful remnant which had learnt that God was a spirit, and must be worshiped in spirit and in truth.

The Assyrian had been recognized by the prophets as the instrument of God's wrath upon Samaria. Nebuchadnezzar was equally recognized as the instrument of his wrath upon Judah. The doctrine that God requires purity in the inward man necessarily involved the further doctrine that sin is an abomination to him and that sooner or later it will meet with divine punishment. National sin brings with it national disaster, just as the sins of the individual bring down upon him the wrath of God.

The Babylonian Exile was thus a necessary part of the spiritual training which Israel had to undergo. One by one all the elements had been eliminated which were antagonistic to the ultimate mission of the chosen race. Of the descendants of Abraham only the Israelites had been selected for the revelation of God that was made on Sinai; of the Israelites only the kingdom of Judah had been allowed to carry on the work that was laid upon them; and of the Jewish state those only preserved their national existence who had learnt the spiritual lessons of prophecy. They alone were prepared for the trial of the Exile, and consequently for the education which the Exile was intended to provide.

It was a new and purified Judah which returned to its old home. The Jewish monarchy was superseded by the Jewish Church. The main body of the returning captives consisted of priests, bitterly hostile to the idolatry which surrounded them and bent on keeping themselves separate from the gentile world. With the loss of national independence had come the consciousness of a religious and spiritual union, and of the fact that the true king of Israel was the Lord himself. It was as a theocracy, not as a monarchy, that the Jewish state must henceforth survive. Once more, therefore, Judah turned to the law of Moses, but with quickened understanding and deeper spiritual insight than had been possible before. Ezra the Scribe and "the men of the Great Synagogue," to quote the language of the Talmud, collected the scattered writings of the past, and revised the text of the Pentateuch. The books of Moses became the basis of political and social life in a way that had never previously been the case, and the Canon of Scripture began to be definitely formed.

Meanwhile a new power had appeared upon the scene of history. Cyrus had overthrown the empire of Nebuchadnezzar and imposed his sway upon the nations of Asia from the far east to the shores of the Ægean. His son Cambyses completed his work by the conquest of Egypt. Once more, as in the days of the Assyrian successors of Tiglath-Pileser, there was one law and one government for the whole civilized world of the East. But the policy which directed and

underlay it was changed. The conquest of Babylonia had taught Cyrus the dangers which attended on the older policy of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings. His invasion of Chaldea had been materially assisted by the existence of disaffected elements within Babylonia itself. The system of transporting the populations of conquered states had failed. The exiles had not lost their old feeling of individual nationality, and instead of losing themselves in their conquerors had retained all their old measure of hatred toward them. We gather from the inscriptions of Cyrus that there were others besides the Jews who welcomed in him a deliverer. His first act, he tells us, after the occupation of Babylonia was to permit the captive population to return to their former homes, carrying with them the images of their gods. The Jews alone had no images to take, and it was accordingly the sacred vessels of the temple which were given into their hands.

The policy of Cyrus was successful, so far, at least, as the Jews were concerned. His memory was regarded by them with gratitude, and Jerusalem remained faithful to the Persian kings. It took no part in the general revolt which broke out shortly after the death of Cambyses and obliged Darius to reconquer almost the whole of the empire of Cyrus. As long as the Persian rule lasted, the Jews continued loyal subjects to the Persian monarch. The "remnant" which had returned had ceased to dream of political independence or of a restoration of the Davidic monarchy; they were content to be merely a religious community, provided their religion was not interfered with and their religious convictions were not outraged. Moreover, between them and their new rulers there was a bond of sympathy. The Persians were practically monotheists. Darius and Xerxes acknowledged but one god, Ormuzd, and Xerxes was the destroyer of the golden image of the Babylonian Bel.

Under the Persian domination prophecy languished and died. Its work, in fact, was accomplished. The revelation of God to his chosen people is henceforth realized, not in a state, but in a church. The Jewish Church has risen out of the ashes of the ancient monarchy. The high priest has taken the place of the king, the temple that of the royal palace. There is no longer any need of the prophet to inculcate the lesson that the God of Israel is one God, and that him only should the people serve. They have no other aim than that of obeying the Mosaic law and fulfilling its minutest precepts.

The danger that now besets the Jewish community is a wholly new one. It is no longer the danger of too little zeal in God's service, but of over-zeal. Strict obedience to the law threatens to dull and obscure the spiritual life. A cold formalism begins to supersede the devotion of the heart and the Jewish Church to lose its earlier vitality. There was need of an awakening, and the awakening came.

Alexander of Macedon had seated himself upon the throne of Cyrus. The Persian empire passed away, trodden under foot by the Greek phalanx. On its ruins rose the kingdom of Alexander's generals, and Greek culture and Greek ideas spread through Asia to the frontiers of India itself. Between the ideal of Greek culture and the ideal of the Jewish Church there was irreconcilable antagonism. Art and beauty, the pride of life and the lust of the eye, were the end and object of the one; a stern sense of duty, a distrust of pleasure, a puritanical hatred of the art which seemed to savor of idolatry, were the distinguishing characteristics of the other. On the one side was polytheism, with all its sensuous indulgences, on the other side an uncompromising monotheism and the Mosaic law.

Prophecy was silent; no priest had arisen with the Urim and Thummim, and the requirements of ritual were fast becoming a weightier matter in the eyes of the religious teachers of the people than a holy life and a pure heart. It was little wonder, therefore, that the seductions of the Greek culture proved too strong for a considerable portion of the Jewish community. Numbers of the more educated and ruling classes yielded to the new influences that were around them, and it almost seemed at one time as if Judah was about to forget its mission,

and to be swallowed up in the Greek world. The Maccabean revolt and the defeat of the armies of Antiochus Epiphanes saved the Jewish Church, and once more separated the true Israel from those who were Israelites only in name.

VIII.

The Maccabean revolt belongs to the same age as the Greek translation of the books of the Old Testament, commonly known as the Septuagint. The translation is a testimony to the influence of the Greek language and to that invasion of the East by Europe which culminated in the Roman empire; but it is also a testimony to the fact that Judaism was in its turn invading the gentile world and infusing it with its own ideas. Jewish communities were establishing themselves outside Palestine, filled with men as zealous for the faith of their fathers as those who had remained in Jerusalem, but who, nevertheless, were willing to mingle with the Greek world and to convert it to their own views. The Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures rendered those Scriptures accessible to all the educated classes of Europe and Western Asia, and at the same time brought the fact home to the mind of everyone that Judaism was not necessarily confined within the limits of Palestine as the heritage of a single people, but might be shared in by all mankind. The time had come when God's revelation to Israel might be preached to the whole world; when the truth of the unity of God could be believed by Jew and gentile alike, and when the Jewish Church, freed from its national peculiarities, its exclusiveness, and its individualism, might be developed into that universal church which the prophets had beheld in the dim future. As the Jewish community was about to be merged into the universal empire of Rome, so the Jewish Church was likewise about to be transformed into the Catholic Church of Christ.

The Septuagint translation presupposes that the Old Testament Canon was complete, or very nearly so. A collection of sacred books must have existed before it could be translated into Greek. The fact that the Canon adhered to in Palestine differed in some respects from the Canon which came to be adopted by the Greek-speaking Jews of Egypt makes no difference to the general fact.

The word "Canon" denoted a rule or standard laid down by public authority. The Canonical books, accordingly, were those which were recognized by the Church as conforming to a particular standard. But this standard itself constituted the rule and law of the Church. It was by it that doctrines were tested and decided, so that whatsoever could not be proved out of Holy Scripture was not to be required as necessary to salvation. The books of Scripture were the title-deeds of the Church; the foundation upon which her creeds were built, and her ultimate court of appeal.

In the Book of Daniel¹ reference is made to "the books" or scriptures, one of which contained the prophecies of Jeremiah. But the first definite account of the Hebrew Canon is to be found in the Prologue of the Book of Ecclesiasticus, the Greek translator of which, writing in B. C. 132, states that his grandfather "had much given himself to the reading of the law and the prophets and other books of our fathers." The same threefold division, therefore, which we still find in the Hebrew Bible was at that time in existence, and it is again alluded to by our Lord when he speaks of "the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms."² The Jewish historian, Josephus, in his controversy with the Alexandrine grammarian, Apion, toward the end of the first century A. D., is still more explicit. He tells us that there were twenty-two books which the Jewish Church "rightly believed to be divine," and that they consisted of five books of Moses, thirteen books of the prophets, and four others which "contain hymns to God and didactic teaching for men." From this list Ecclesiastes alone

¹ Daniel ix, 2.

² Luke xxiv, 44.

seems to be excluded. According to the Jewish belief the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings were written by prophets and were consequently regarded as prophetic. The view was just, for, as we have seen, the prophets were the early writers of Jewish history, and the educators of the people throughout the period of the monarchy. The "didactic teaching" of Josephus is the Haggadah of the Jewish Talmud.

In one respect, however, the arrangement of Josephus deviates from that of the Hebrew Bible since his time. In his third division of the Holy Scriptures he reckons only four books instead of the nine, or the eleven, which appear in the modern Hebrew Bible. The twelve minor prophets were considered to be one book, the Books of Ruth and of Lamentations were attached to Judges and Jeremiah, and the Books of Job, Esther, Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Chronicles were counted among the prophets. This would leave the Psalms, the Proverbs, the Book of Daniel, and the Canticles for the last division of the sacred books.

But it must be remembered that there was a considerable amount of controversy among the Jewish Rabbis as to the canonical character of the Books of Esther, of Canticles, and of Ecclesiastes, and that in the case of Ecclesiastes more especially discussion grew hot between the great schools of Hillel and Shammai. Indeed, it would seem that it was not until the Council of Jamnia, about A. D. 90, that the Book of Ecclesiastes was finally admitted into the Canon, and the Talmud declares that it would have been considered apocryphal had it not been for the verses at the beginning and end. Josephus, throughout his writings, never refers to either Canticles or Ecclesiastes, Proverbs or Job, and Philo the learned Jew of Alexandria in the age of Christ, is equally silent in regard to the Books of Ecclesiastes, Canticles, and Esther. In the New Testament also there is a similar silence in regard to Ecclesiastes and Canticles, as well as to Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Judges.

In contrast with the extreme caution displayed by the Palestinian Jews in admitting books into the sacred Canon, was the readiness of the Jews of Alexandria to enlarge the volume of Holy Scripture. The Septuagint, as it was received by the early Christian Church, included several books which are now to be found in the so-called Apocrypha. Early Christian writers, accordingly, generally quoted them as of equal authority with the other canonical Scriptures. It was St. Jerome who threw the weight of his influence and learning on the side of admitting only the twenty-four books of the Palestinian Hebrew Canon, and in spite of the contrary view of St. Augustine his opinion came, on the whole, to prevail. The question, however, was never authoritatively decided in the Western Church till an attempt was made to do so by the Council of Trent. But the attempt only led to an additional cause of difference between the Roman and the Reformed Churches.

The wider limits assigned to the Old Testament Canon at Alexandria were in some measure due to the doctrine of inspiration which prevailed there. Moses, as Philo tells us, was the "Chief-prophet" of God, the holy men who followed him being but his disciples and comrades. The Pentateuch accordingly was the sole authoritative source and rule of faith, round which all other sacred writings revolved like satellites round their central sun. The inspiration which was breathed through these lesser and derivative Scriptures was different in degree, if not in kind, from that of the law itself, and though the wisdom of God spoke through their writers it was only in so far as their works reflected the teaching and truths of the law. Wherever this was the case, the voice of the divine wisdom might be recognized and the work in which it was heard might be admitted into the collection of sacred books.

A similar doctrine was also held by the Jewish Church in Palestine, though the results which followed from it were not the same. There also the Pentateuch was exalted at the expense of all the books of the Old Testament Canon. They were all "divine," it is true, but the divine character of the Mosaic law was incomparably higher than that of the prophetic

and later books. It alone formed the basis of orthodox belief; it was the one supreme rule of faith by which all doctrines and all other books had to be tried.

Among the Sadducees and Samaritans this doctrine led to the practical rejection of the divine authority of all other portions of the Hebrew Canon. Whatever belief could not be proved out of the five books of Moses was at once condemned. But among the bulk of the Jews, whose opinion ultimately became that of the whole Jewish Church, the doctrine had less far-reaching consequences. It merely caused the Pentateuch to be put in a place apart, and to be regarded as of higher authority than the rest of the Canon. The Canon was further divided into three parts, consisting of the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Kethûbim or "Writings," more usually known as the Hagiographa, and as the Pentateuch was held to exceed in degree of inspiration and importance the Prophets, so too the Prophets were considered to exceed the Hagiographa which followed them.

The Hagiographa comprise all those books which, from one cause or another, were the last to be added to the Canon of Scripture. They consist of the following books: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the two books of the Chronicles, to which Ruth and Lamentations are usually added.

The distinction between the Pentateuch and the rest of the Canon on the one hand, and the Prophets and the Hagiographa on the other, must be carefully kept in mind, as it constitutes the keystone in the Jewish theories about the Scriptures. The prophets are the interpreters and followers of Moses; they hand on the law which he was commissioned to deliver, and explain those parts of it which are obscure. But it is only in so far as they are in agreement with the law that their teaching is to be listened to; if it could be shown that they differ from the law or originate new ideas of their own they would have to be rejected at once. Their authority is not so much derived from any special revelation to themselves as from the revelation which was made once for all to Moses. The Hagiographa stand on a still lower footing. They form, as it were, a bridge from the Canon to the unecanonical works that were based upon it. Nevertheless, they are a part of the Canon; they "soil the hands," as the Talmud expresses it. But they relate to ritual and preaching rather than to the foundations of religious faith, and they introduce us to that "Haggadah" — that transformation of history into parable — to which Talmudic Judaism became so attached. In the Pentateuch we have history combined with the establishment of law and religion; in the Prophets we again have history with its religious and moral explanation; in the Hagiographa history tends to pass into parable and to be considered of importance only in so far as it can teach a lesson in religion or morality.

Such was the Jewish conception of the Canon of the Old Testament. It was a conception underneath which lay a belief in a most stringent form of inspiration, but modified by the further belief that inspiration admitted of various degrees. While the Pentateuch was what we should now call verbally inspired, the inspiration of the other books of the sacred volume was at most but plenary. Indeed, it may be questioned whether the Hagiographa were not often regarded much in the same way as the Apocrypha in the English Church.

IX.

Modern study and research have done much to change or modify these older ideas of the character of Scripture. The Canon, indeed, remains as it was — that is a matter which has been definitely settled once for all — but our views in regard to the contents of the Canon have necessarily undergone alteration in the course of centuries. Controversy and inquiry have been more especially keen during the last century and a half, and revolutionary theories have been propounded, which, if accepted in their entirety, would reverse the judgment of the Jewish Church and overthrow the continuous and universal belief of historical Christianity. The

Pentateuch, it is now alleged, instead of being the oldest portion of the Old Testament, and the foundation of Israelitish religion and history, is really later than many of the books which are classed by Jewish tradition among the Prophets; the larger part of the law, instead of being promulgated by Moses, is the invention of the age of Josiah and the Exile; while the Book of the Law professedly found by Hilkiah, the high priest, in the temple in the reign of Josiah, is actually the older portion of the Book of Deuteronomy, which has just been composed for the first time.

The arguments by which such views are supported are mainly philological. It has long been recognized that there are traces in the Pentateuch of the use of different documents, especially in the Book of Genesis. The critic, accordingly, has set himself to separate these, one from the other, and to determine to his own satisfaction the precise fragments that belong to each. The process of dissection has been carried out with such nicety that the beginning of a verse is ascribed to one author, the middle of it to a second, and the end of it to a third. But such mathematical exactitude would be impossible in the case of a modern English writer; much more must it be so in the case of an ancient Hebrew writer. Hebrew has long since ceased to be a spoken language, and our knowledge of it is derived from the limited amount of literature contained within the covers of the Old Testament. Such knowledge is necessarily imperfect; numberless words must have existed of which no trace remains, while the interpretation of many of those that remain is exceedingly doubtful. Equally doubtful and equally imperfect must be our knowledge of the niceties of Hebrew grammar and still more of Hebrew idiom. How, then, is it possible to determine the peculiarities of the documents embodied in the Pentateuch with such precision as to know where one begins and another ends, or to what date they are severally to be ascribed?

It is true that support is found for the conclusions of the so-called "literary analysis" in other lines of argument. Thus, it is urged that there are evidences in the Pentateuch of three separate systems of legislation, which have been superimposed upon one another, the earliest belonging to the nomadic period in the history of Israel, the second coinciding with the time when the Israelites were firmly established in the Promised Land, and the third implying the age of the Exile. The oldest code, termed the Book of the Covenant,¹ though not put into shape until after the foundation of the monarchy, embodied ancient material some of which may have gone back to Moses himself. In it the priests, it is urged, are not yet regarded as a special and separate class; altars are ordered to be built wherever the Lord shall "record" his "name";² the only feasts known are those of the Sabbath, the Sabbatical year, and the feasts of unleavened bread, of the harvest, and of the ingathering; the only sacrifices enjoined are burnt offerings and peace offerings; while the commands in regard to purification are conspicuous by their absence. In the Deuteronomic code, which is supposed to have first come into existence in the age of Josiah, there is a distinct advance upon this earlier legislation. The whole tribe of Levi is set apart for the priesthood; it is only "in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of" the Israelitish "tribes"³ that altars may be erected; new feasts are introduced, the Passover, the feasts of weeks and of tabernacles, and the year of release; tithes, vows and freewill offerings are added to the simple sacrifices of the older epoch; and a distinction is made between clean and unclean beasts. In the latest or "priestly code," which occupies the larger part of Leviticus and Numbers and is asserted to belong in its complete form to the age after the Exile, there is further and radical change. The priests, "the sons of Aaron," are distinguished from the Levites, who henceforth are relegated to subordinate posts about the sanctuary; it is only at the tabernacle, the type and precursor of the temple of Jerusalem, that sacrifices and offerings may be made, the festivals of the new moon and the seven great Sabbaths, the day of first fruits, the feast of trumpets, the year of jubilee, and above

¹ Exodus xxiv, 7.² Exodus xx, 24.³ Deuteronomy xii, 14.

all the great day of Atonement, are added to the earlier list of festivals; sin offerings and trespass offerings are commanded in addition to those already known; and the laws about purification assume a prominent position and are of minute character.

The existence of these three stages in the Mosaic legislation cannot be denied, though the conclusions drawn from them by the "higher criticism" need not be accepted. The composite character of the Mosaic books is a fact now accepted by all schools of theological opinion. The more we know about early oriental literature the more certain it becomes that the oldest and most authoritative portion of it was to a certain extent a compilation and a growth. The "Book of the Dead," which has been termed the Bible of the ancient Egyptians, is an illustration of this fact. It is a combination of ancient materials, put together at the very beginning of Egyptian history, and subsequently enlarged by additions of various kinds. Marginal notes and commentaries crept into the text, explanations of phrases or ideas which had become obsolete made their way into the body of the work and in their turn became the subject of later explanations and notes, while whole chapters were interpolated which did not belong to the original book, though they were doubtless of great antiquity. The Babylonian collection of hymns to the gods suffered the same fate. Here, too, the text underwent many alterations, and numerous additions were made to the original work, before the text was finally fixed so rigidly that the slightest deviation from it was considered to be a sin.

It is evident that the history of the Pentateuch also cannot have been very dissimilar. The Book of Genesis relates the history of times long anterior to the birth of Moses. If, therefore, the great Hebrew legislator was its author he must have made use of older documents which he combined together and incorporated in his work. From the very nature of the case the book must be a compilation. Nor need we believe that the Pentateuch, as a whole, took its final shape before the time of Ezra and "the men of the Great Synagogue." Such, at least, was the Hebrew tradition. Indeed, the Second Book of Esdras (chapter xiv) goes further and ascribes to Ezra the rewriting of all the twenty-four books of the Old Testament, including the Law. The law, it is said, had been burnt and lost, and was consequently revealed again to Ezra from whose lips it was written down. Besides the twenty-four books of the Canon seventy other books were revealed to the Jewish scribe, which contained esoteric doctrine, too sacred to be published. In all, therefore, ninety-four books (not two hundred and four as in the Vulgate and the Authorized Version) were written in forty days by Ezra's assistants. The same story is repeated by the early Fathers of the Christian Church, and we meet with it in the works not only of St. Clement of Alexandria,¹ but in those of St. Irenæus as well.² The fact that the death and burial of Moses are described in the last chapter of Deuteronomy would of itself show that the old Hebrew tradition had a foundation of truth. Moreover, a careful examination of the historical books of the Old Testament gives further indications that the history of the Pentateuch resembled that of most of the other sacred books of the world. On the one hand, it is plain that the Mosaic law could have been but imperfectly known. The best of the kings and prophets would otherwise have never set its commands at defiance by sacrificing at the high places and allowing laymen to take upon them the functions of the priest. In fact, the Books of Samuel, so far from regarding sacrifices at the high places as forbidden by the law, look upon it as an usage in which there is nothing to reprimand. Up to the days of Hezekiah the people had burnt incense to "the brazen serpent that Moses had made" all through the days of men like Samuel and David, Jehoshaphat and Jehoiada, and it was not until the reign of Josiah that the "Book of the Law" was found in the temple. The reading of it produced an immediate effect upon both the king and his subjects, and brought about the most thoroughgoing reformation witnessed in Judah during the period of the kings. Such a neglect of the Book of the Law would, on the other hand, inevitably produce corruption of its

¹ Strom. i, 24.

² Adv. Hær. iii, 21, 22 (A. D. 185).

text. Where none was concerned to preserve it intact, or where portions of it only were read and known, phrases would necessarily make their way into it, if not whole chapters and paragraphs. Words and phrases which had ceased to be intelligible would be altered or explained, the explanations, as in the Egyptian "Book of the Dead," subsequently being incorporated into the work, and from time to time the text would be adapted to the requirements and conceptions of the age. Where a text was not protected by a reverence which made every letter of it sacred, more especially if it were a code of religious and national law, changes of this kind would almost certainly have taken place. We need not be surprised, therefore, if it can be shown that periods subsequent to that of the Exodus are reflected in parts of the Pentateuch, or if instances are recorded in it which belong to a later age. This would not make it any the less the work of Moses as a whole, or diminish its value and authority, religious as well as historical.

Moreover, if there is any truth in the biblical record, the law was revealed to Moses by God himself. It was not the self-evolved code of a legislator, whose view was limited by the needs of the community for whom the laws were made. It was a code given by the national God of Israel, a God whom the Christian Church believes to have been also the one true God and Creator of the world. The legislation, therefore, which Moses was commissioned to promulgate could not have been intended merely for the temporary wants of the caravan in the wilderness. It must have had lying, as it were, implicit within it the principles of the legislation, both secular and divine, which Israel would need in the land that had been promised to it. It may be that the regulations necessitated by the after life of the Israelitish people were not described in detail: that may well have been left to a future age to accomplish in accordance with the divine scheme of gradual education; but if we believe at all in the divine origin of the Mosaic law we must believe also that there lay in it all the germs and principles which it was reserved for later experience to develop. Hence, while we may fully admit that until the time of Ezra there was no fixity or finality in the text of the Pentateuch, and that the laws contained in it could be modified or developed as the progress of the centuries demanded, we must also believe that the legislation as a whole is of Mosaic origin, and that we may safely turn to the Pentateuch for authentic records of early Hebrew times.

Here, however, the "higher criticism" would again join issue with our conclusions. The narratives of the Pentateuch are denied a historic value, and the denial is based on a variety of assumptions. There is, first of all, the assumption that the Israelites of the age of Moses and for many centuries afterward were illiterate barbarians, without books or schools or scribes. Then there is the second assumption that the results of the "literary analysis" are ascertained and unassailable facts. And lastly, there is the assumption that none of the documents discoverable in the Pentateuch—or rather the Hexateuch, for the Book of Joshua is attached to the Books of Moses—is older than the revolt of the ten tribes and that the statements contained in them are derived for the most part from oral tradition and report.

If the documents are indeed of so late a date, if none of the materials embodied in the Book of Genesis goes back to the age to which they relate, the conclusion of the higher critics would be justified. We cannot trust a history which is not contemporaneous with the events it professes to record. Unless we have a written record descending from the time to which the events belong, we can have no certainty that the events have ever happened. Oral testimony, unchecked by other and more trustworthy evidence, leads us to myth rather than to sober history.

If, therefore, it can be proved that neither the Pentateuch in its present form nor the materials which are embodied in it are of older date than the ninth century before the Christian era, we shall be forced to allow that the skepticism of the critics may be right. But such a proof cannot be given. A scientific fact can be established only by the method of comparison, and

the critics have nothing but the books of the Old Testament itself with which to compare them. To compare a thing with itself is not a scientific mode of comparison.

X.

But though the purely biblical critic is unable to invoke the method of comparison there is another worker in the field of ancient literature that is able to do so. Oriental archæology is a new and very important factor in Old Testament controversy. It is the creation and the marvel of our nineteenth century, and its discoveries become every day more numerous and more startling. It has already caused us to rewrite the history of the ancient oriental world, to reconsider the opinions which we have inherited from the past, and to realize for the first time how high was the culture and civilization of the ancient East. It brings us face to face with the men around whom the history of the past has gathered; we can read their thoughts, dissect their beliefs and reconstruct their daily life. We have disinterred and interpreted the actual monuments which they left behind them, and are, therefore, no longer dependent on the accidents of a merely literary tradition and the vicissitudes through which manuscripts and the copies of manuscripts must pass. A history which was already a sealed book to the Greeks and Romans has been opened out before our eyes, and almost every day brings us fresh revelations of a forgotten past. The historical records contained in the Pentateuch no longer, therefore, stand alone. It is no longer possible to question their authenticity on the ground that they are inconsistent with one another or with the critic's conceptions of the condition of the ancient world, or because the documents which embody them are assumed to be late. We can now confront the conclusions of critical skepticism with the monumental facts of oriental archæology. And the result is not favorable to the cause of skepticism. The historical character of a considerable part of the Pentateuch has been vindicated; we may anticipate with confidence that more of it will be vindicated in the future.

We have already seen that the primary assumption upon which so much of recent Old Testament criticism has been really built, the assumption, namely, of the late use of writing in Israel, is an assumption against which modern discovery emphatically protests. There is no reason why Moses should not have been able to write the Pentateuch — nay, there is every reason why he could have done so. And the documents made use of for the earlier history of Genesis may equally well have been of the date to which their narratives refer. Indeed, in one or two instances we can now show that they actually were. The historical character of the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, for example, has been established by Assyriological research, despite all the arguments which an unbelieving criticism had brought against it. So far from a Babylonian campaign into the West being inconceivable in the time of Abraham, as has been asserted, we learn from the cuneiform inscriptions not only that the kings of Babylonia claimed to be rulers of the "land of the Amorites" two or three centuries before Abraham could have been born, but that long ages previously Babylonian monarchs had conquered the West, welding it into a single empire with their own Chaldean home, setting up images of themselves on the shores of the Mediterranean and even marching their troops into the Sinaitic Peninsula. The cuneiform tablets of Tel el-Amarna, which show that the Babylonian script and language had become the script and literary language of Western Asia, are a proof how profound and lasting the influence of Babylonia must have been. The very names that meet us in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, as well as the political situation it implies, are met with again in the early annals of Chaldea. Lagamar was an Elamite god, and Kudur-Mabug, "the servant of the god Mabug," is the name of an Elamite prince who lived just at the period to which the Book of Genesis would refer the lifetime of Abraham, and who is called by his son "the father" or "ruler of the Amorite-land." This son was king of the Babylonian principality of Larsa, and his name was

Eri-Aku, in which we cannot fail to recognize that of Arioch, king of El-lasar. Babylonia was at the time divided into several states, and an Elamite chieftain was exercising suzerainty over it. Such is the evidence of the cuneiform record and such is also the evidence of the Old Testament.

Let us turn, again, to the tenth chapter of Genesis. Here we read that Canaan was the brother of Mizraim or Egypt. But there was only one period in the history of the ancient world when such an expression was correct, and when a writer could have coupled Canaan geographically and politically with the kingdom of the Nile. This was the period of the eighteenth and nineteenth Egyptian dynasties—the period, that is to say, to which Moses belongs.

When, then, the statements of the Pentateuch can be tested by an appeal to the evidence of contemporaneous monuments, the verdict has been given on its side. Is it fair to deny that this would be equally the case where the evidence has not yet been found? On the contrary, the confirmation archæology has already afforded of the substantial truth of Old Testament history is a presumption that the more archæological discovery advances the more will that truth be confirmed.

One of the arguments of the negative criticism in favor of the late date some of its advocates assigned to the Book of Genesis has been disposed of by the tablets of Tel el-Amarna. Certain of the earlier narratives of Genesis have a strong Babylonian coloring, and in the case of one of them—the account of the Deluge—we have learned that the Chaldean and biblical accounts resembled each other even in details. It was urged that this likeness could be explained only by the Exile, when the Jews had an opportunity of acquainting themselves with the ancient literature and legends of Babylonia. But we now know that this literature and these legends were studied in Palestine, and even in Egypt, before the Exodus took place. Moses and his contemporaries could have read, and, if need were, have copied them in Egypt as well as in Canaan. The latter portion of the Babylonian legend of the first man, Adapa (or Adama), and of how sin entered the world has been found among the *débris* of the office of the scribe at Tel el-Amarna, while the beginning of it, belonging to a copy made for the Assyrian king nearly eight centuries after the tablet of Tel el-Amarna had been buried in the ground, has been brought from the ruins of the library of Nineveh to the British Museum. So, too, the Babylonian story of the Flood has its parallels in both of the documents into which the biblical narrative has been analyzed. Both the “Elohists” (or “Priestly Code”) and the “Jehovists” exhibit proofs of an acquaintance with it; we cannot say that, while one of them borrowed from it in Babylonia during the Exile, the materials of the other were drawn from it at an earlier time from some Palestinian version. The Babylonian coloring appears in both alike, while there are indications, such as the change of the Babylonian “ship” into an “ark,” that the biblical account was written on Palestinian ground.

Modern criticism would reject the judgment of Jewish antiquity which separated the Book of Joshua from the five books of Moses and included it among the Prophets. It has become the fashion to speak of the “Hexateuch,” and to regard the Book of Joshua as forming a continuation of the Book of Deuteronomy. From the purely literary and philological point of view this conclusion of criticism may be right. As has already been said, the Pentateuch probably underwent a final revision shortly after the return from the Exile; indeed, that such a revision took place is expressly stated by Jewish tradition. There is no reason why the original Book of Joshua should not have shared in the revision and have been appended to the books of Moses. The death of the great legislator would be naturally followed by an account of his successor, and of the mode in which the work he had begun was carried out. In the Pentateuch we have a history of the preparation for the conquest of Canaan; in the Book of Joshua a history of the conquest itself. That the latter book, therefore, should show the same redacting hand as those

which precede it is only natural. Thus far the results of the "literary analysis" may be safely accepted.

But on the other hand it must be remembered that, if the so-called Hexateuch had ever really formed a single work, it would be impossible to explain the sharp line of demarcation that was made by the Jews and Samaritans as far back as our materials allow us to go between the "prophetical" Book of Joshua and the Mosaic law. We may even trace this line of demarcation back to the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Ezra read and expounded "the book of the law of Moses"¹ and it was in "the book of Moses" that the prohibition was found against the entrance of the Ammonite and Moabite "into the congregation of God."² At that time, at any rate, "the book of the law of Moses" or "the book of Moses" must have been a compact whole and have ended where the Pentateuch ends to-day. In the belief of Ezra and his contemporaries neither the "Deuteronomist" nor a later "redactor" could have incorporated the history of Joshua's conquests into the sacred law. The same testimony is borne by the Canon of the Samaritans which consisted of the Pentateuch alone. The Pentateuch, and the Pentateuch only, was considered of such divine origin as to constitute the sole rule and basis of faith. This belief, however, presupposes that the Pentateuch had already been marked off by the Jews from all the rest of their ancient literature, and that the doctrine of a graduated inspiration in the books of the Canon had already taken root among them. Had there ever been actually a Hexateuch, the existence of the Samaritan Pentateuch would be hard to explain.

Like the other historical books of the Old Testament the Book of Joshua is a compilation. This accounts for the full details that are given of certain events in the conquest of Canaan, and the little that is said about others. While the capture of Ai is described at length, and the war of the five kings against Gibeon is fully described, we hear nothing of the way in which the kings of Taanach or Megiddo or Dor were overcome,³ or of the war which he carried on "a long time" with the Canaanites of the north.⁴ In the Books of Judges, of Samuel, and of Kings the marks of compilation are very distinct. In the Book of Judges we find an ancient song of triumph, the song of Deborah and Barak, one of the earliest relics of popular Hebrew literature, and in the Books of Samuel we have varying accounts of David's rise to favor with Saul which are not very easy to reconcile. The compiler has given them honestly, just as he found them, without any attempt to harmonize their apparent contradictions. That is the task that has been left to a later and more critical age.

When these compilations of ancient documents were thrown into their present shape it is generally useless as well as needless for us to inquire. It is only in the case of the Books of Kings that we can approximately fix a date. Here the compiler breaks off with the statement that Evil-Merodach, the son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar, had brought the captive Jewish king Jehoiachin out of prison and had given him a daily allowance "all the days of his life." Evil-Merodach reigned only two years, being murdered in B. C. 560. It would seem that the Books of Kings must have been finished before this happened and while Evil-Merodach was still on the throne. In that case the date of the work can be determined almost to a year.⁵

The Books of Samuel were doubtless finished at a very much earlier period. What this precisely was is a matter of little consequence. The important thing is not the date of the compilation, but of the documents of which that compilation consists. If they are contemporaneous with the events they commemorate, their statements can be accepted as authentic and trustworthy; if they are of later origin, we cannot be sure of their historical truth.

For the most part even the most skeptical criticism is constrained to admit the historical character and early date of the materials used in the Books of Judges and Samuel. It is admitted that the song of Deborah and Barak is of the age to which it claims to belong, and that

¹ Nehemiah viii, 1.

² Nehemiah xiii, 1.

³ Joshua xii, 21, 23.

⁴ Joshua xi, 18.

⁵ Cf. also I. Kings iv, 24, "beyond the river" Euphrates, mistranslated in the Authorized Version.

many of the narratives incorporated in the Books of Samuel were composed in the reign of David. Even where a narrative has been asserted to be a fiction or a misinterpreted tradition we can at times bring archæological testimony to prove its exactitude. Thus, the account of the oppression of Israel by the king of Aram-Naharaim, shortly after the Israelitish settlement in Canaan, has been called improbable and unhistorical. But the tablets of Tel el-Amarna have risen up to corroborate the story. We learn from them that the kingdom of Mitanni, called Nahrina by the Egyptians and Aram-Naharaim in the Old Testament, was for a long period of time an important element in the history of Canaan. It had made alliances with Canaanitish or Amorite chiefs and had sent forth its armies to invade the land. The presence of its troops in southern Palestine, therefore, was no new thing. Moreover, there was a special reason why the king of Naharaim should hold Palestine in subjection in the days of Othniel. If, as Egyptologists believe, the Exodus took place in the closing days of the nineteenth Egyptian dynasty, the conquest of Canaan could not have been effected before Rameses III., the second Pharaoh of the twentieth dynasty, sat upon the throne. Now, Rameses III. was assailed by a vast confederacy of northern tribes which had descended upon Egypt by sea and land. Those who had marched by land had made their way through the lands of Naharaim, of the Hittites, and of the Amorites and had carried with them in their march some of the populations whose countries had been overrun. Among these were the people of Naharaim. Nevertheless, though Naharaim was one of the nations with whom the Pharaoh was called upon to fight, its king did not enter Egypt. This is certain from the fact that he is not named among the princes who took part in the great invasion. While, therefore, he had joined the invaders he yet had not actually crossed the Egyptian frontier. What is more probable than that he had remained behind in southern Palestine, and that in him we must see the Chushan-rish-athaim of the Book of Judges?

XI.

Archæology is thus vindicating the trustworthiness of the documents embodied in the historical books of the Old Testament. It has shown that they are what they profess to be, authentic records of actual facts. It has given us an assurance both that they themselves go back to the early age of Israelitish history, and that the compilers who have used them have done so honestly. There has been no tampering with the words of the original writer; where two narratives existed which seemed inconsistent with one another, both have been given without any attempt to explain away their contradictions. The good faith of the compiler is conspicuous throughout, and we may feel confident that in the Books of Joshua and Judges, of Samuel and Kings we have documents and materials coeval with the facts which they have handed down to us.

Doubtless the compilation was intended to convey a religious lesson. It was not only the history of Israel that had to be recorded, but also the religious and moral truths which that history illustrated. The writer had a religious aim over and above his purely historical one. But this is just what we should expect if he wrote under the guidance of the divine will. The very essence of what is termed inspiration is that the inspired Scripture should be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." This is the quality which distinguishes it from writings that are merely secular. It is because the history of Israel has been so written as to convey "instruction in righteousness" that the historical books of the Old Testament form part of the Canon of Scripture.

The materials used by the compilers of the historical books were various. Poems and psalms, books like that of Joshua, the writings of the prophets, and the state chronicles and records were all alike brought into requisition. They imply the existence of a considerable

amount of literary activity, and consequently of teachers and schools. The cuneiform characters employed throughout Western Asia at the time when the tablets of Tel el-Amarna were written had been superseded by the simpler Phœnician alphabet, and papyrus or leather had taken the place of clay as a writing material. It had consequently become easy to compose books of some length, as the writer was no longer limited by the possible size of a clay tablet. Even libraries, it is probable, were beginning to be formed. They had existed from early times in Assyria and Babylonia, as well as in Egypt, and the statement in Proverbs, xxv, 1: "These are the proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out," goes to show that in Jerusalem also there was a library in which scribes were employed, as in Assyria, in copying, or, as we should now say, in editing the older literature of the country.

The existence of such a library throws light on the way in which the literature was preserved as well as upon the mode of its transmission. The Assyrian tablets show us how scrupulously careful the scribes were about their work. The very lacunæ in the original were reproduced in the copy, with the words "fracture" or "recent fracture" attached to them; a character of whose value the scribe was doubtful was either copied exactly or else represented by both the signs to which he thought it might be equivalent, and when he was unable to read or understand his text he frankly wrote "I do not know." At the end of each copy a colophon was added stating the nature of the work and the place from which it had come, while special lists were drawn up of the authors of the great epics and literary productions of Chaldea.

We have no reason to think that the Jewish scribes did not exercise equal care. When they tell us that certain proverbs had Solomon for their author we have no ground for imagining that they were without good authority for the fact. On the contrary, separated as they were from the wise king of Israel by an interval of only two centuries, it would have been extraordinary if they had had none. An autograph manuscript of Solomon could easily have lasted down to the time of Hezekiah, and even if it had perished, copies of it might well have been in existence. The usage of the Assyrian scribes warrants us in believing that when such copies were made, a note was added describing and guaranteeing the original text.

When, therefore, we are told that the history of Solomon contained in the Books of Kings was extracted, at least in part, from "the book of the acts of Solomon," or when the First Book of the Chronicles asserts that "the acts of David, the king, first and last, behold they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer," we have every reason to credit the statement. The art of writing was known and practiced in Palestine long before the Israelites arrived there, and still longer before the Israelitish monarchy had been founded; we have gathered that under the kings a library was established in Jerusalem, like the libraries which existed elsewhere in the ancient oriental world and (as we now know) had once existed in Canaan itself before the days of the Exodus; and the scribes and copyists employed in the library occupied themselves with the republication of the older literature of their country. Archæology has confirmed the trustworthiness of the history which is embodied in the Books of Judges, of Samuel, and of Kings, while even the most skeptical criticism is fain to admit that some of it at least is coeval with the events which it describes. Lastly, the compilers who have thrown this history into its present form were scrupulously honest, transcribing sometimes word for word the older documents that lay before them, even where these appear to disagree one with the other. Is not the conclusion inevitable that in the historical books of the Old Testament we have authentic and credible history?

At the same time we must remember that it is history — not the mechanical reproduction of transcendental infallibility. The sacred writers were historians and not machines. We must not look, in them, for a mathematical exactitude which would be impossible in any form of history, much more in ancient oriental history. Inspiration made use of the powers and aptitudes of the human writer; it did not transform them into something superhuman. It

adapted history to the needs of man's spiritual and moral nature, but it left that history with all the imperfections and limitation to which the age and the place rendered it subject. To think otherwise is to adopt the doctrine of the Hindu theologian, who believes that every word of the Rig-Veda is the expression of divine infallibility; it is not the doctrine which has been held by the Christian Church.

From the literary point of view the Old Testament historian had the same difficulties to contend with as all other authors who have undertaken to write the history of the past. He was limited by the imperfection of his materials; where these failed him, he was liable to draw the same erroneous inferences as any other honest historian who wrote under similar circumstances. He could not go beyond the facts at his disposal, and the imperfect record of the facts sometimes led him to wrong conclusions. The same oriental archæology which has so fully vindicated the general truthfulness of the Books of Kings has also demonstrated that the chronological framework on which the history of the Jewish and Israelitish kingdoms is made to rest is altogether wrong. It is more than forty years in excess, and the synchronisms between the later kings of Judah and Samaria are based upon an incorrect estimate of time.

We must not forget that when the Books of Kings were put together the kingdom of Judah had ceased to exist. The books were compiled in Babylonia far away from the library of Jerusalem, and the building in which it had been stored had doubtless been destroyed. The compiler nevertheless quotes from older documents, some of which he mentions by name, and these documents, it must be noticed, belonged not only to the Jewish kingdom but to the northern kingdom as well. It may be asked how an exile in a distant land could have had access to these records of the past? The question is one which could not have been answered before the decipherment of the Assyrian monuments.

But we now know that though the Assyrian and Babylonian kings warred upon men, they did not make war upon books. On the contrary, there were some among them who had strong literary tastes. Assur-bani-pal, the son of Esar-haddon, was especially a patron of literature, and no present was more acceptable to him than some ancient text which his library did not contain. A large portion of the books contained in the library of Nineveh were copies of texts which had been brought from Babylonia. Others are the old texts themselves, taken from the library of some city which had been captured and plundered by the Assyrian troops. One of these texts, which is now in the British Museum, was a list of the plants that were cultivated in the gardens of Merodach-baladan.

What happened in the case of Babylonia when Assyria was the conquering power might well have happened in the case of Jerusalem when the holy city was taken by Nebuchadnezzar. The inscriptions which Nebuchadnezzar has left behind him prove him to have been a man of culture and piety, conciliatory and humane according to the notions of the time. Just as the generals of Assur-bani-pal had carried away the literary treasures of a captured Babylonian town, so we may assume might Nebuchadnezzar have carried away the contents of the Jewish library. And in Babylonia they would be accessible to whoever wished to study them. Assur-bani-pal is never weary of telling us that the new editions of ancient books which were made for the library of Nineveh were intended for the use of "readers," not for that of the king merely and a select circle of scribes.

But, furthermore, the history of Assur-bani-pal's library throws light on the fact that the compiler of the Books of Kings was able to appeal to "the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel" and to make use of the biographies of the northern prophets Elijah and Elisha. As Babylonian books were brought to the library of Nineveh and copied there, so too would copies of Israelitish books be made for the library of Jerusalem, or the originals themselves be deposited in it. It may be that after the capture of Samaria by the Assyrian king, Sargon, the wreck of its ancient literature was carried to the capital of the southern kingdom.

There are traces that the writings of the northern prophet Hosea have undergone a revision at the hands of Jewish editors, and that they were put into their present shape in Judah is evident from the introduction, where the date of Hosea's ministry is fixed primarily by the reigns of Jewish sovereigns.

XII.

The historical books which are based on the work of the prophets lead us naturally to the books of the prophets themselves. But we are not to suppose that the prophetic books now contained in the Old Testament Canon represent the whole of the literary activity of that long line of prophets who, from the days of Samuel to those of Malachi, and in the northern kingdom as well as in Judah, announced the promises and the threatenings of God to a stiff-necked and rebellious people. Many of the prophets left no literary works behind them; others wrote histories only, fragments of which have been incorporated into the historical books or into the collected writings of the prophets themselves; while a large amount of prophetic literature must have perished altogether. This must have been more especially the case with the prophetic literature of the northern kingdom. But much of it must have been lost in the South as well. Here and there we have quotations from an older prophet by one of his successors whose works have been preserved; or allusions are made to some ancient prophecy. Thus, Isaiah tells us that his prophecy against Moab¹ was one that had been made "long ago" (for such is the correct translation of chapter xvi, verse 13), and adapted by the prophet himself to the existing circumstances of the time.² Indeed, if Ewald is right, the older prophecy is broken off in the middle of a sentence: "And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place, and he shall come to his sanctuary to pray, and shall not prevail"—the continuation being given in the new oracle which Isaiah was commissioned to announce: "But now the Lord hath spoken, saying: Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned." A similar, though briefer, quotation from an older prophecy is to be found quite at the beginning of the Book of Isaiah.³ The same prophecy is also quoted by Micah,⁴ but with additional matter which must originally have belonged to it both at the beginning and at the end. Chronology, however, is against the supposition that Isaiah had the words of Micah before him. Micah was the younger contemporary of Isaiah, and the prophecy in question was delivered at the very commencement of Isaiah's ministry. There seems, therefore, but one explanation possible: Isaiah and Micah alike must have derived the prophecy from an older source.

A careful examination of these and similar quotations makes it clear that the words of a prophecy might be modified and changed so as to adapt them to the circumstances of the day. Passages might be omitted or added, and alterations might be made in the proper names. A prophet might revise his own prophecies in this way, as well as the prophecies of others. The object of prophecy was not to register the passing events of the time, but to declare the will of the Lord. And that declaration necessarily varied with the change of events, bringing with it a corresponding change in the language of prophecy. It might even happen that two versions—an earlier and a later one—existed of the same prophecy, so that when the prophet's writings were collected together it would be needful either to choose between them or to set them side by side, or finally to combine them one with the other. Many of the difficulties which we experience in explaining the Hebrew prophecies and fixing their respective dates are due to this cause. Mutually inconsistent notes of time seem to be, as it were, interwoven together, one of them indicating a date or an occasion with which the other is incompatible, and at times we have a perplexing interchange of Ephraim with Judah which drives the commentator to despair.

¹ Isaiah xv, xvi.

² Isaiah xvi, 14.

³ Isaiah ii, 2-4.

⁴ Micah iv, 1-3.

It is only where a collection of a prophet's writings was made either during his lifetime or shortly after his death, that, with a few exceptions, they have survived. The works of the older prophets have perished, not so much because their prophecies were not written down, for such a view is inconsistent with the fact that men like Nathan and Gad composed books, as because no authorized collection was made of their oracles. It was not needful that the prophet himself should commit his utterances to writing. Baruch, as we know, was the scribe of Jeremiah, and the words of the herdman Amos, which he called upon the people to "hear" and not to read, must have been written down by others. The one important thing was that the utterances of the prophet should have been preserved in writing, and that these written utterances should have been collected into a book.

In most cases there is no question that the collection is restricted to the works of the prophet whose name it bears. But over the Book of Zechariah and still more over the Book of Isaiah a good deal of controversy has arisen. The controversy has been needlessly acrimonious, since so long as a prophecy is stamped with the marks of its divine origin it matters little to what individual, age or prophet it may belong. It is not like a historical document, whose credibility so largely depends upon its date. Still less is it like the Mosaic law whose divine authority and signification for all future Israelitish history is so closely bound up with its traditional claim to antiquity. Questions of date and authorship do not affect the essential nature of prophecy or our belief in its truth.

Neither in matter nor in manner do the last six chapters of the Book of Zechariah harmonize with the eight which precede them. They presuppose a different political horizon — the age of the Assyrian rather than of the Persian empire. That the two collections of prophecies should have been bound up in the same volume is no more extraordinary than that books of various age and authorship should be bound up together in the same Canon of the Old Testament. It may be that the authors of both collections bore the same name, of Zechariah, or there may have been other reasons for including them in a single volume. What these reasons were we shall never know, and it would be useless to inquire.

In the Book of Isaiah, too, it would seem that more than one collection of Hebrew prophecies has been joined together. The later chapters form a whole which, in style and language, as well as in their historical and geographical outlook, stand apart from the prophecies of the older Isaiah. Even in the English translation it is impossible to read them without feeling that we are transported into a new and different world, the world of Cyrus and not of Hezekiah. It is not that the prophet has been carried in spirit into a later age, but he moves in that age in actual reality. The atmosphere that surrounds him and his contemporaries is wholly changed from that in which the earlier Isaiah lived, whether as man or as prophet. The Jewish monarchy has passed away, with all the ideas and beliefs that gathered around it, and a new world of life and thought has taken its place.

Recent criticism would have us believe that the Book of Isaiah in its present form is almost as much a collection of works of different date and authorship as the Psalms themselves. The process of dissection and disintegration has been carried out with an unsparing hand, until comparatively little has been left to the Isaiah whom we know by name, the contemporary and counselor of Hezekiah, the patriot who delivered his message of hope and encouragement to his countrymen in their hour of extremest danger. But such minute analysis savors of that hair-splitting dissection of the Pentateuch which we have already had to consider, and the arguments which tell against the latter tell equally against the attempt to analyze the larger and clearly marked discoveries of the Book of Isaiah into a number of fragments. It is true that the historical chapters which separate the two great divisions of the book one from the other are a proof that the editor did not confine himself to the collection only of Isaiah's prophecies, and the Assyrian inscriptions have informed us that these chapters are but fragmentary —

episodes extracted from a fuller story and arranged without any chronological order. But the fact does not authorize us to suppose that the book is a mere cento, into which the anonymous prophecies of the later Jewish monarchy and the Exile have been heaped pellmell together. It is not improbable that in some cases where the critic fancies he has discovered the signs of a date later than that of the contemporary Hezekiah he has merely found passages which have been adapted to the needs of a later time.

In the majority of instances the introductions prefixed to the prophetic books state the periods to which they severally belong. Where this is not the case, speculation has been busy. The Book of Joel, formerly assumed to be of early date, has of late been relegated by certain scholars to the post-exilic epoch. The date of Nahum, on the other hand, has been approximately fixed by his reference to the sack of Thebes¹ which, as we have learned from the Assyrian monuments, took place about B. C. 665. Among the minor prophets the Book of Jonah alone occupies a peculiar position. It is a book about the prophet, instead of being a collection of his prophecies. It reads, moreover, more like an extract from an Assyrian chronicle than like the history of a Hebrew prophet. But whatever view we may take of its character will have little bearing on the question of its age. Whether it was composed shortly after the lifetime of the prophet or whether it is a compilation of a much later date it is impossible to tell. All we can say is that the author could not have been personally acquainted with Nineveh itself, as he includes within its precincts not only Nineveh itself, but also the neighboring towns of Calah and Dur-Sargon, the last of which was not built until a century after the age of Jonah the son of Amittai. For those who knew of Nineveh only by hearsay the statement was practically accurate, but it could not have been made by one who had actually visited the spot.

We now come to the third and last division of the books of the Hebrew Canon. In this the Psalms take the foremost place. In New Testament times the whole book went under the name of "David," though it was known that many of the psalms contained in it were not the composition of the old Israelitish king. But David had been famous as the sweet singer of Israel, the founder of its psalmody, the inventor of its musical instruments,² and the psalms ascribed to him occupied a prominent position in the work. Other collections were subsequently added to the original one, until eventually the Book of Psalms came to consist of five collections combined into a single book for use in the services of the temple. As it is generally recognized that some of the psalms are as late as the age of the Maccabees, the final revision of the book must come down to a comparatively late period. Endeavors have recently been made to assign the whole work to the same late date, and to deny that any of the psalms are earlier than the post-exilic epoch. But the assumption is contrary to the universal belief of antiquity and is inconsistent with the internal evidence of many of the psalms themselves. Moreover, it has been proved that the text of the book is corrupt in several places. Had all the psalms contained in it originated at a period when the Septuagint translation was already in process of making, it is inconceivable that such should have been the case. The corruptions of the text imply that the psalms had been long in use and that erroneous readings had crept into them even before they had been collected in their present form.

We may, in fact, see in the Book of Psalms relics of the psalmodic literature of Israel from the days of David down to those of the Maccabean war. That they are relics only, preserved, it may be, by their employment in the ritual, is evident from the existence of other psalms in the historical books which are not included among them. The song of "the bow," preserved in II. Samuel, i, 19-27, was extracted from the Book of Jasher and never found its way into the Book of Psalms, and the psalm composed by Hezekiah "when he had been sick"³ is similarly wanting there. On the other hand, we meet with psalms in the collection which refer us to the

¹ Nahum iii, 8.² Amos vi, 5.³ Isaiah xxxviii, 10-20.

later days of the Jewish monarchy or to the period of the captivity. It is difficult not to agree with Hitzig that a psalm like the seventy-sixth is most naturally referable to the overthrow of Sennacherib's army, while psalms like the one hundred and twenty-sixth or the one hundred and thirty-seventh are full of memories of the Babylonish Exile. It is not easy to decide when the superscriptions attached to the psalms were first composed. That it was before the Septuagint translation of them was made is evident from the fact that they already appear there. But their historical value is slight, and the ascription to Moses of the only psalm (the ninetieth) in which it is stated that the extreme age of man is four score years, shows with how small an amount of critical ability they were compiled.

The second book of the Hagiographa as usually printed is the Book of Proverbs.¹ Here again we have a compilation of older collections of a special form of literature. The bulk of the work is ascribed to Solomon, and though in modern times the ascription has been disputed, there is no reason whatever for doubting its correctness except a general desire to reduce the age of the Old Testament writings and to reject the common belief of the past. To the first and larger collection a second was added, consisting of the proverbs which had been republished during the reign of Hezekiah;² and to that again a third collection, in which were contained "the words of Lemuel the king of Massa, which his mother taught him." The cuneiform inscriptions have told us where Massa was. It was the district which lay in the northern part of Arabia, extending from Babylonia in the east to the land of Edom in the west. It adjoined Uz, the home of Job, as we may gather from Genesis, x, 23, and formed part of that "east country" whose wisdom was celebrated in the days of Solomon.³

The Book of Proverbs is therefore fittingly associated with the Book of Job in the Hebrew Canon. Here, too, the hand of the modern disintegrator has been at work. The speech of Elihu has been declared to be an interpolation, and the introduction and conclusion of the book are denied to have originally belonged to it. But such judgments rest solely on the "subjective" views and "literary tact" of the critic; no solid and tangible argument can be brought forward in their favor. The critic has been more successful in suggesting a date for the composition of the book. It would seem to belong to that exilic age when the great question of the existence of evil began to assume an increased importance in the Jewish mind. The old doctrine that piety was rewarded and wickedness punished in this world had received a rude shock. The reforms of the good king Josiah had been followed by his defeat and death in battle, and God had allowed his temple to be destroyed and his people to be led into captivity at a time when, outwardly at all events, the law of Moses was better observed than in the earlier and more prosperous days of Jewish history. The old theory had broken down, and it had become plain that righteousness does not always bring with it worldly success, or evil-doing misery and disgrace. An answer was needed to the problem why the righteous is allowed to suffer, while the wicked flourishes, and it is this problem which the Book of Job is intended to solve.

The text of this book is exceedingly hard to understand, and the Septuagint translation shows that such was already the case in the second century before the Christian era. The fact may be due to two causes. It may be that for reasons unknown to us the text became corrupted at an early period, or it may be that the book was originally written in a Semitic dialect, not exactly the same as Hebrew though closely resembling it. If this had been so, some of the difficulties we experience would result from our ignorance of the words and idioms of the dialect

¹ The order followed is that of German manuscripts. In the Spanish manuscripts the general order is: Chronicles, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Esther, Daniel, and Ezra (with Nehemiah), while the Talmud arranges them as follows: Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra (with Nehemiah), and Chronicles. These variations are in striking contrast to the fixity of the order of the older of the Mosaic and prophetic books, and indicate the later date at which this part of the Canon was finally settled.

² Proverbs xxv-xxx.

³ I. Kings iv, 30.

in question, others from the corruptions introduced by copyists in an endeavor to assimilate the language of the book to ordinary Hebrew. That Job was not a native of Palestine, and that the scene of the work is laid in Uz, eastward of Edom, gives a coloring of probability to the conjecture.

After Job comes the Song of Songs. Much nonsense has been written about this old relic of Hebrew lyric poetry by commentators whose heads were full of ideas concerning allegories and symbolical descriptions of the Church. But the book tells its own tale. It is a lyric drama, with the fair Shulamite as its heroine and her shepherd lover as its hero. That there are obscurities in the poem is true. But they are due to the difficulty of always knowing who it is that is speaking, whether the chorus, or the bride, or her lover, or King Solomon himself. The poem shows us that, as in the modern East, lyric poetry existed also among the Israelites. That only one specimen of it should have come down to us may be regretted, but it need occasion us no surprise. It was the sole example of that form of literature upon which the seal of inspiration had been set. The Old Testament Canon includes and represents all the varied products of ancient Hebrew literary art; the spirit of God inspired them all alike; but where its inspiration should rest was not for man to say. As there is but one Book of Job, one discussion of the problem of evil, so also there is but one Song of Solomon.

That it should be called the Song of Solomon does not necessarily imply that Solomon was its author. It was because it related to the great king of Israel, not because it was his work, that the name was attached to it. Indeed, it is difficult to suppose that he could have written a poem which painted him in somewhat unfavorable colors. But that the work is of the age of the great king there is no reason for denying. The allusions in it, the atmosphere it breathes, are all of his age. And the philological arguments that have been urged in favor of a later date can none of them be sustained.

Next in order to the Song of Songs are placed the Books of Ruth and Lamentations. From a historical point of view, they would more fittingly be appended to the Book of Judges and the prophecies of Jeremiah, the position they occupy in the English Bible. But their inclusion in the Hebrew Hagiographa indicates that they were not admitted into the Canon until after the list of the prophetic books had been closed. They had doubtless come down from an early period, but for reasons which we cannot now discover their authorship must have been questioned and their claims to canonicity disputed. It took time before these claims could be finally allowed.

We now pass on to Ecclesiastes or the Preacher. How late it was before this book was received into the Canon we have already seen. Modern research holds that it could not have been written until after the return from the Exile. Indeed, the Jewish scholar Grätz has endeavored to prove that its author was a contemporary of Herod, and the general opinion of scholars tends to refer its composition to the Maccabean age. That it cannot be of very early date is evidenced partly by the analogies we find in it to the ideas of Greek philosophy, partly and more especially by the fact that the language of it is late Hebrew. Even the so-called "waw conversive," that invariable characteristic of classical Hebrew, is (with three exceptions) absent from its pages. In putting the words of it, therefore, into the mouth of Solomon the author has adopted the usage of the Haggadist rather than of the historian. Solomon has ceased to be the historical king of Israel, and has become the representative of a class. He is "the Preacher," not the monarch of Israel.

The Book of Esther, which next follows, brings us back once more to the records of history. It is a book which has been especially dear to the Jewish patriot. During the middle ages, when the property and life of the Jew were constantly at the mercy of a fanatical mob or a mercenary king, it was a delight to him to hear the tale of the great deliverance that had once been wrought for his countrymen when they too were in similar peril. But to the

Christian reader the book seems of lesser value. Not only is it distinguished by its exclusively national tone, it is further distinguished from the rest of the Old Testament Scriptures by the absence from it of the name of God. It reads more like an extract from the state annals of Persia, which has been edited by Jewish hands, than like those other biblical narratives to which the historical books of the Old Testament have accustomed us. It is, in fact, another instance of the way in which the Spirit of God made use of all the various forms of literary work that were current in the ancient eastern world, and how what is termed inspiration was not confined to one particular class of books. The breath of God "bloweth where it listeth," and in spite of the narrow limits within which our narrow prejudices might wish to inclose it we are taught the lesson that "what God hath cleansed" we may not call common or unclean. When the Book of Esther was written we do not know; all we can say is that it must have been after the accession of Ahasuerus or Xerxes the son of Darius Hystaspes, and the names of some of the chief personages mentioned in it — Esther, the Babylonian Ishtar, and Mordecai, the Babylonian Mardukâ or "man" of Merodach — may perhaps indicate that Babylon, the second capital of the Persian empire, was the place in which it was composed.

XIII.

The Hebrew Canon places the Book of Daniel next in order to the Book of Esther. Like the latter, the Book of Daniel occupies an unique position in the Old Testament. It is a double work — double in language, in matter, and in character. Partly written in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic, it is also partly a history, partly an apocalypse. Over its date and the authenticity of its history heated controversies have arisen. The present writer believes that they have been settled finally and decisively by the cuneiform monuments. We now possess the annals of the last king of the Babylonian empire, and the history of the fall of his power officially composed just after it had taken place; we possess, moreover, the proclamation of Cyrus in which he justified his conquest of Babylonia and gave permission to the Jews and other exiles to return to their homes, as well as inscriptions of Nabonidus, the last king of Babylonia, in which the rise of Cyrus is described. Furthermore, a long series of contract tablets exists, recording the commercial transactions of the trading community of Babylonia, and extending month by month and year by year from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar to that of Darius. The dates are always given in them, and we thus have a complete and very exact chronological register of the Babylonian empire. Though the name of Belshazzar occurs upon these monuments, he never became king. His father, Nabonidus, was the last of the independent monarchs of the Babylonian empire, and Nabonidus was an usurper, not descended from the royal house of Nebuchadnezzar. Of "Darius the Mede" there is no trace, and we learn from the inscriptions that there was no siege and no capture of Babylon. The city opened its gates to Gobryas, the general of Cyrus, after the defeat of the Babylonian army near Sippara in the north.

In the earlier chapters of the Book of Daniel we have, in fact, Haggadah and not history. They are a parable for our instruction, not a text-book for the historian. That unwritten history which has always been so popular in the East, and in which all historical perspective is lost and historical personages of various epochs are brought together, is the history that is reflected in them. The Book of Daniel introduces us to a new development of Jewish thought and literature, which was destined to become predominant as time went on, until it had banished all history, in the modern sense of the word, from the writings of the Rabbis. The keynote of later Jewish literature is the so-called Haggadah, and the beginnings of Haggadah are to be found in the Book of Daniel.

In the case of the Book of Daniel, therefore, the verdict of criticism is also the verdict of archæology. We cannot regard it as a record of contemporaneous events. Criticism assigns its composition to the age of the Maccabees, and the existence of Greek words in it seems to imply that this conclusion is right. The conclusion is further confirmed by its place among the Hagiographa. The Jewish Church has excluded it from the prophetic books, and in spite of the prophecies it contains has placed it among the books which, on account either of the lateness of their date or of the time when they first became officially known, were the last to be admitted into the Canon. The same testimony is borne by the numerous additions which were made to the narratives of the book. It was unprotected by the reverence which gathered round the older literature of the country, and stories like that of Susanna, or of Bel and the Dragon, were freely added to it.

The last four books of the Hagiographa are again different from those that precede them. In Ezra and Nehemiah we have important contributions to Jewish history. They are the sources of our knowledge of the events which followed upon the return from the Exile. In the Jewish Canon they form but a single book, and their present division cannot be traced back further than the time of Origen. They appear, indeed, to have been compiled by the same author. Large portions of them have been copied word for word from the lost works of Ezra and Nehemiah, who, like the compiler, made use of official documents. In one place we have a narrative that must have been written by a contemporary of Zerubbabel, and a long passage in the Book of Ezra¹ is in the Aramaic language. It is taken from what has been termed the "Aramaic Chronicle," parts of which have been translated into Hebrew in other passages of the book. The compiler must have lived in the age of Alexander the Great, since Jaddua, the last high priest mentioned by him,² was a contemporary of the Macedonian conqueror, while Darius Codomannus, the last king of Persia, is called "Darius the Persian," as if the Persian monarchy had already ceased to exist.

The chronology of the two books presents insoluble problems, which are complicated by the fact that the chronology followed by Josephus, the Jewish historian, is irreconcilable with any solution of them that can be proposed. On the one hand, Zerubbabel and his contemporaries — Joshua the high priest, and Haggai and Zechariah the prophets — are placed under the reign of Darius I.³ With this agrees the genealogy of the high priests in Nehemiah xii, 10, 11, as well as the express testimony of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah themselves. On the other hand, in Ezra iv, 23-v, 5, their period is transferred to the reign of Darius II., a century later, while Josephus makes Sanballat, the adversary of Nehemiah, a contemporary of Alexander the Great, and asserts that Manasseh, who was driven away by Nehemiah,⁴ was a brother of Jaddua and the founder of the temple at Samaria. The authority of Josephus may indeed be discounted, as the document he followed is plainly erroneous in other particulars. But the apparent contradiction in the Book of Ezra remains. We know, however, that it must admit of an explanation; even skeptical criticism does not impugn the historical trustworthiness of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah and allows that the materials of which they are composed are derived from contemporary sources. The fact is an instructive one, as it is a warning against the assumption that because there are seeming contradictions in our records, the records are, therefore, untrue.

Another problem which is raised by the two books is their relation to the apocryphal First Book of Esdras. The First Book of Esdras takes the place of the Book of Ezra in the Canon of the Septuagint and consequently in the Canon of early Christianity, and there are scholars who consider that its text is preferable to that of the Massoretes. At present the question is still in dispute.

The compiler of the Books of Nehemiah and Ezra, or of the First Book of Esdras if the

¹ Ezra iv, 8 to vi, 18.

² Nehemiah xii, 11, 22.

³ Ezra iv, 3-6

⁴ Nehemiah xiii, 28.

Canon of the Septuagint is preferred, was doubtless the author of the Books of Chronicles. These latter close the list of the Hebrew Hagiographa and may be described as the history of Israel, and more especially of Judah, written from a ritualistic point of view. A comparison of them with the Books of Samuel and Kings makes this very clear. It is the temple and its services, the priesthood and the law, which occupy the chief place in the writer's mind. The history of the northern kingdom is almost entirely ignored; it was only in Jerusalem that the true and legitimate center of Israelitish religion was to be found. The details of secular history lose their importance when regarded under such an aspect, and become of value only in so far as they bear upon the history of the Jewish Church. Ritual, rather than history, is the primary consideration of the Chronicles. At the same time he makes use of historical documents which are not quoted elsewhere in the Old Testament and thus introduces narratives into his text some of which have been verified by archæological discovery in spite of the doubts that the "higher criticism" has thrown upon them. Some of these documents have to do with the genealogies which have been attached to the work on account of the necessity of determining who were genuine members of the Jewish community and church. The date of the work, which in the Hebrew Canon forms but a single book, is fixed by that of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. That all three works belong to the same author may be considered certain from the similarity of language, style and contents that exists between them, as well as from the fact that where the Books of the Chronicles break off, the Book of Ezra begins.

A survey of the Hagiographa brings two facts plainly before us. One of these is the extreme caution displayed by the Jewish Church of Palestine in regard to the admission of a book into the Canon of Scripture. It was long and keenly debated whether Ecclesiastes could be regarded as a book that "soiled the hands" by reason of its sacred character, and a similar discussion arose over the Song of Solomon. Even Esther and Proverbs were objected to, the one because the name of God is not mentioned in it, the other on account of the contradictions it was alleged to contain, and each had to fight its way to recognition. The second fact which results from our survey is the contrast presented by the Law and the Prophets to those tardily received books of the Hagiographa. No controversy ever arose about their sacred character, no question was raised in regard to their authorship, their claim to authority was never contested. Instead of being relegated to a class apart, at the end of the Canon, they were from the first set in the forefront of it. It has been reserved for modern criticism to reverse the verdict of Jewish antiquity, and to place the Law in a lower and later position than that of some of the Hagiographical books. The very fact seems to bring its own condemnation with it.

XIV.

The Greek Canon of the Alexandrine Jews disregarded the distinction which had been made between the Hagiographa and the other books of the Old Testament, and added to them several others most of which are now included in the Apocrypha. Some of these books — Tobit, Judith, the stories of Susanna, and of Bel and the Dragon — are examples of Haggadah in its full development. Of claims to historical credibility they possess but little, and such as they had have been set aside by archæological research. The First Book of the Maccabees, on the other hand, is a historical work of great value, and takes up the story of the Jewish nation where it is dropped by the books of the Hebrew Canon. For the history of the great persecution under Antiochus Epiphanes, which extirpated the growing spirit of Hellenism in Judah, and brought the people back to a consciousness of their mission in the world, it is our best, if not our sole, witness. In the Second Book of the Maccabees, on the contrary, the Haggadic element once more makes its appearance. History is subordinated to the inculcation of a religious lesson, and we can no longer trust the historical accuracy of the details.

Of the other Apocryphal books, the Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus or the Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach are by far the most notable. They belong to the same class of literature as the Book of Proverbs, and breathe the same exalted moral tone and the same fervid belief in the wisdom and righteousness of God. The divine wisdom of which they treat finds its prototype in the Proverbs of Solomon and prepares the way, through the writings of Philo of Alexandria, for the conception of the Logos of St. John. The spirit of wisdom, which taught mankind religion and virtue, was shown by Christianity to be the eternal Word which became incarnate in the person of Christ.

The book of Ecclesiasticus was translated into Greek, as we learn from the prologue, by the grandson of the author in B. C. 132. The Wisdom of Solomon probably belongs to the same period. They thus stand about midway between books like Tobit and Baruch, which were composed toward the close of the Persian epoch, and the Second Book of Esdras, that strange Apocalypse which seems to have been written in Greek about A. D. 90.* Naturally, therefore, it was not included in the Septuagint any more than the Prayer of Manasseh or certain other works which laid claim to a certain kind of Scriptural authority but have never become canonical. Among these we may mention the Book of Enoch, which is quoted in the Epistle of St. Jude, verses 14, 15, and enjoyed a large amount of favor in the Coptic and Ethiopic churches.

The Book of Enoch is an example of the apocalyptic literature which had so wide a circulation in the Jewish world in the age of our Lord, and it has been shown to be the work of different authors, the original nucleus having been written in Aramaic in the second century B. C. Other apocalypses of a similar nature were the Ascension of Isaiah, which professed to describe the martyrdom of the prophet by being sawn asunder,¹ and a vision of the future which had been revealed to him; the Assumption of Moses which is supposed to be referred to by St. Jude²; and the Revelation of Baruch, in which it is pretended that the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans was foreseen by the ancient Hebrew prophet. Of a wholly different character are the eighteen "psalms of Solomon," which it would seem were originally written in Hebrew not long after the capture of Jerusalem by Pompey (in B. C. 63). The psalms declare that the Lord is about to avenge the sufferings of his people upon the foreign invader, and predict the speedy appearance of the Messiah. They illustrate the tendency of the time to ascribe the literary compositions of the age to the older inspired writers of Israel, and thereby to secure for them a currency and an authority which otherwise they may not have acquired. But the existence of all this mass of pseudonymous matter affords a full justification for the caution displayed by the Jewish Church of Palestine in its reception of the canonical books. It is a caution which a belief in the indwelling and guiding spirit of God alone renders explicable.

The period which saw the growth of the Apocrypha saw also the rise of the two great parties of the Jewish Church, the Pharisees and the Sadducees. But their history belongs rather to the age of Christ than to that of the Old Covenant. The Sadducee, for whom the religious development of Israel began and ended with the Mosaic law, and the Pharisee, who ranked orthodoxy of belief and practice above justice and mercy, were alike unable to recognize the change that was about to pass over the Jewish Church. It was among the self-denying and more spiritually minded Essenes that the first victories of the new faith were to be won. But to describe them would carry us beyond our scope. With the closing of the Old Testament Canon the Jewish Church had completed its work. A few more years and the exclusive Church of a single people had to make way for the Catholic Church of Christ. Israel after the flesh passed into the spiritual Israel of the whole world.

In tracing the history of Israel after the flesh there are three facts which stand out in

¹ Hebrews xi, 37.

² St. Jude, 9.

relief. One of these is the indissoluble connection that exists between the history of the Hebrew people and the history of the Hebrew Scriptures. The one depends upon the other; we cannot understand either of them apart. It is the Old Testament which tells us of the divine mission to which Israel was called, and it is the history of Israel which guarantees and verifies the truth of the Old Testament. We cannot deny the truth of the history and retain our old faith in the Canon of Scripture, or deny the trustworthiness of the Canon and yet accept the history which it records. If the larger part of the Mosaic law is indeed the invention of the exilic age, we shall have to change our whole conception of what is meant by the "Word of God."

But, in the second place, we have learned how varied is the literature of the Old Testament and over how long a space of time it extends. In both respects it offers a marked contrast to the books of the New Testament. It represents, in fact, all that is left of what was once the literature of a highly cultivated nation. Law and history, poetry and drama, ethics and philosophy, as well as prophecy—that unique product of the Hebrew race—are all to be found within its pages. There is no dead uniformity of subject, of thought, or of expression. On the contrary, the books of the Old Testament are as diversified in manner as they are in matter. Each writer preserves his own individuality; and to argue from the usage of one to that of another is no more justifiable than it would be in the case of two modern authors. The length of time, moreover, covered by the Old Testament writings increases the differences observable among men. With the progress of the ages came new words and idioms, new conceptions, new enlargements of spiritual view. The work of a contemporary of David was not, and could not be, similar to the work of a contemporary of Ezra, whether linguistically, intellectually or theologically. The history of Israel is reflected in the history of its sacred books.

Then, thirdly, that history is seen to have been a slow education for the mission which Israel was created to fulfill. Little by little the Israelitish people were sundered from the nations that surrounded them and made to realize their own peculiar place in the world. But they were never taken out of the world; never, except for the brief interval of their wanderings in the wilderness, were they planted in hermit-like isolation out of the reach of other men. From first to last they formed part of that great stream of civilization which we call the history of the ancient East. Babylonia had been their nurse, Egypt their schoolmaster, and in their home in Canaan they found themselves the bridge and highway between the two great powers of the oriental world. In the shock of conflict with the Assyrian empire the northern kingdom perished, and Judah was left alone to represent the older Israel. But Judah, too, passed away as an independent nation, and in the Babylonian Exile its character was transformed. The Jewish Church arose out of the ashes of the ancient monarchy, while the nation itself became but an insignificant part of the great Persian empire. Though for a brief space the Maccabean victories once more gave to Judah temporal power and political independence, their effect was but transitory. It was not as a kingdom, but as a church; not as a nation, but as a religious community, that Judah henceforth affected and influenced mankind.

The spread of the Greek language through the conquests of Alexander of Macedon, followed by the empire of Rome with its common government and code of laws, caused Judaism to permeate the whole of the civilized world. Jewish colonies and synagogues were established from one end of the Mediterranean to the other, and gentile proselytes joined them in the imperial city itself. Judaism was fast becoming a universal religion. But as long as it remained Judaism it could be universal in name only, not in reality. For such a transformation it was needful that it should cease to be the Jewish Church, and that it should become that kingdom of God which prophecy had discerned in the far future and of which the Jewish Church was the antetype and forerunner. In the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth the Old Testament was summed up and fulfilled. The Jewish Church had accomplished its work, and like the Jewish monarchy of an earlier day was called upon to make way for a newer and better

order of things. Henceforth there was to be no distinction between Jew or gentile, no antagonism between the chosen people to whom God's revelation had been made and the world in the midst of which they lived. The two streams of Jewish and gentile history had united at last, and the message of God which had been revealed to Abraham in Canaan and to Moses on Mount Sinai was now made known to all mankind.

A. H. Sayce



THE REVELATION.



Samuel Ines Curtis.

MANUSCRIPTS, BY SAMUEL IVES CURTISS, D.D.

CHAPTER I.

TRADITIONALIST AND MODERN CRITICAL VIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

EVERY student of the Old Testament has at least two questions to ask concerning it: (1) Whether we have the books which were first given by inspiration to the Old Testament Church? Hence the subject of the preservation and transmission of the original text of the Old Testament should have a place in the present work. (2) What is the origin of the Old Testament books? As there is much diversity of opinion with reference to the answer which should be given to this second question, it is thought best simply to indicate the views of the traditionalists¹ and of the evangelical modern critics in the barest outline.

Those who hold the traditional view regarding the origin and composition of the Old Testament books and the evangelical modern critics may be said to agree in the belief that God is in a special sense the author of the Old Testament, that "Men spake from God being moved by the Holy Ghost."² They also agree regarding the underlying purpose of the Old Testament, that it is God's revelation of his will, concerning the way of man's salvation and the Savior who was to come. They differ in their estimate of the concessions which the Spirit of God has made to human limitations growing out of the age, country, manners, customs, and literary habits of an ancient oriental people. The traditionalists postulate, not only a perfect revelation of God's purpose, but also a perfect vehicle in the original autographs of the Old Testament. This school maintains that where there are allusions to science, while popular language is used, the science of the Old Testament is fundamentally accurate, and if there is any seeming discrepancy between the science of the present day and that of the Bible a more profound study will show that the ultimate science and that of the Bible, stripped of its popular dress, will be found in full accord. So, too, they maintain that the inspiration which God gave his servants enabled them to write correct history, and that, aside from any changes which have taken place in the text during the 2,400 years of its transmission, a study of the monuments will show that all the details of the Old Testament history, as far as we can follow them, are correct. This school affirms that if the science and history of the Old Testament are not substantially accurate in every particular we have no sufficient guarantee for the claim that God has made a revelation of himself to his people in the Old Testament Scriptures. Practically, inspiration is postulated not only for the doctrines but also for the facts of the Old Testament, hence the claim is made, not only for perfect moral and religious teaching, so far as the needs of the age were concerned, but also for perfect science and history. Hence every allusion to the authorship of books in the Old and New Testaments is considered as a declaration of God's Spirit with regard to the men who wrote them. The words of Christ, "For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings how shall ye believe my words?"³ is considered as the testimony of the omniscient Savior with reference to the authorship of the Pentateuch, and as final for every true disciple. While the traditional school fully admits the duty of Christian scholarship and investigation, it maintains

¹ This term is used for want of a better.

² II. Peter i, 21.

³ John v, 46-47.

that the results of criticism can only be to confirm the words of Christ and the New Testament writers regarding the authorship of the Pentateuch. The same position is taken with respect to the authorship of the second part of Isaiah. As one of the New Testament writers¹ quotes some of the words of this prophecy as from Isaiah, this form of quotation is considered the testimony of inspiration regarding the authorship of the passage quoted and practically of the whole book.

There are certain decided advantages in the position of the traditionalists as indicated. It is easily understood by all. Indeed, the first thought of almost every Christian who reflects on the subject, is that the Bible should not only be infallible in doctrine, but also in science and history. It is this conviction which has been, to a great extent, the inspiration of recent researches in Palestine, Assyria, and Egypt. The article by Professor Sayce shows not only the antiquity of literature among some of the Semitic peoples, but also the verification of the Old Testament at important points, and the early character of its sources.

In view of the discussions now in progress regarding the Old Testament with reference to its science, history, and chronology, the Church is studying the Bible as never before. Some, like Eli, are anxious for the Ark of God, and in view of the great expansion that is given to scientific studies in our colleges and universities many fear that the youth who are engaged in these studies are liable to be alienated from the book which has been honored and loved by their fathers. Evangelical modern criticism, however, claims to restore the Old Testament to its place of honor and confidence in the minds of all classes of Christian students by giving a faithful view of its origin and composition. While holding, as has been remarked, that God is the real author of the Old Testament, it claims that the questions of origin and composition, on the human side, are legitimate objects of the freest and deepest research, and that no genuine reverent criticism can cast a cloud upon God's Word because as God is truth, the truth regarding his Word can only reflect honor upon it. They claim to find, that while God is the author, through his Spirit, of the Old Testament Scriptures, he did not change the literary habits and characteristics of the people to whom he gave his revelation by any miraculous exercise of his power; that while his truth was supernaturally revealed, the men to whom he made the revelation were not like stenographers, to whom we dictate just the words we wish to have written, or even like a messenger, old or young, to whom we repeat a message that is to be given verbally to some person.

These analogies fail to state the case as apprehended by the critics. It must rather be represented as follows: the message itself is of an entirely religious character. If its religious purport depends on a historical fact, like the resurrection of Jesus, that fact must be established, but the credibility of the witness is not affected by his being an Oriental, unacquainted with modern science, history, and literary methods. Such a man, if converted, trained in the Christian religion and possessed of God's Spirit could become an effective instrument in the conversion and salvation of his fellow-men. Indeed he would undoubtedly be a better instrument of the Spirit, in this respect, to his own people than the greatest scholar living. His way of apprehending and presenting Christian truth, while not differing in any essential particular, would greatly differ in details from the presentation made by a graduate of one of our universities, who would utterly fail to reach an oriental people until he had become familiar with their life. This may serve as an inadequate illustration of the position of the evangelical school of modern critics. They believe that God's Spirit inspired Israelitish lawgivers, prophets, and psalmists to a degree and in a way which was not granted to any other religious writers of that time or of any time outside of the Biblical books; but they maintain, as the result of their investigations, there is no evidence that God revealed the facts of history, or protected these writers from error in every detail in their use of history. They maintain that more competent,

¹ Matthew iii, 3; compare Isaiah xl, 3.

honest writers could not be found in that age. They reject the theory of pious frauds set forth by Kuenen,¹ but they hold that a critical study of the Old Testament shows it was not God's purpose to reveal history, or to utter prophecy for its own sake, but rather to give his truths to his servants and enable them to set forth the measure and kind of revelation that he designed for a given age. Therefore, he left them free in their literary methods, and in their use of materials, although guarding them in a supernatural way from error in the statement of divine truth. A remarkable illustration of this is furnished when we compare certain accounts which we have in the early chapters of Genesis with those which are found in the parallel Babylonian texts. In one case we have a simple, noble, monotheism, which can only have been insured by the controlling power of God's Spirit, in the other there is gross polytheism.²

The evangelical modern critics assert that they are not afraid of any scientific discoveries, or of any critical researches. They regard a science which rules God out of his universe, and a criticism which rules him out of the Scriptures, as without foundation.

From their point of view the utterances of Christ and the New Testament writers regarding the Pentateuch³ are not the verdict of inspiration with respect to the authorship of the five books of Moses, but simply the popular language of tradition, which neither raises nor decides the question, who wrote these books. They consider that in the Pentateuch, the lawbook of the Israelitish nation, we have a growth extending through many centuries, that this collection of laws received its name from Moses as its most distinguished founder and representative, who is said to have written parts of the Pentateuch,⁴ rather than the whole as we now have it; that all pentateuchal laws, whatever their age, may be considered the material outgrowth of Mosaic laws and in their oral form as assigned to him.

It cannot be affirmed that evangelical modern critics disagree fundamentally with the traditionalists regarding the authorship of the Old Testament books, aside from the Pentateuch and Joshua, Isaiah, and Zechariah, although they differ in assigning a late date to such books as Joel, Ecclesiastes, and Daniel. There may be said to be substantial agreement among recognized adherents of all evangelical schools with reference to the origin and purpose of the Old Testament books aside from those mentioned. Criticism certainly does not weaken the position that we have the very books which were first given to the Old Testament Church.

¹ "The Religion of Israel," Vol. III, p. 75.

² Compare Genesis viii, 21, "And the Lord smelled the sweet savor," with Smith, ed. Sayce, "The Chaldean Account of the Genesis," pp. 286, 287, "The gods smelt the savor, the gods smelt the good savor; the gods like flies over the sacrificer gathered."

³ *E. g.*, Matthew xix, 7; Mark vii, 10, xii, 19; John i, 45, etc.

⁴ Exodus xvii, 14, xxiv, 4-7, xxxiv, 27; Deuteronomy xxxi, 9, 22, 24.

CHAPTER II.

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS NOT MERELY A SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST.

SOME might suppose that in the Old Testament we have simply a survival of the fittest. It is evident that an extensive Hebrew literature has perished, of which not a single trace remains, except as afforded by the quotations in the Old Testament.

The ancient world had poets before it had historians or any written literature. Snatches of poetry have been preserved in the Old Testament, which had evidently been handed down from mouth to mouth and never committed to writing. Lamech's "Song of the Sword,"¹ Canaan's Curse and Shem's Blessing,² and Jacob's Blessing,³ are examples. But we also have a quotation from the "Book of the Wars of Jehovah,"⁴ and two quotations from the "Book of Jashar,"⁵ which, if we may judge from these specimens, were poetical books in which ancient songs, long preserved by memory, were inscribed. We are not informed as to the character of these books, although we may infer that they were more secular than religious. Doubtless there were other books of poetry whose names have not come down to us, because no quotations from them have been preserved.

We also find evidences of an extensive historical literature. Joshua is said to have written in "the book of the law of God."⁶ What he wrote was certainly not our Book of Joshua. There is no further mention of such documents until the time of Samuel.⁷ From the time of David there seems to have been a recorder or chronicler in connection with the royal family until the extinction of the Southern Kingdom.⁸ There was also probably the same officer in connection with the Northern Kingdom. Subsequent to David, with the exception of Solomon, for the details of whose life "The Acts of Solomon"⁹ are referred to, after a short summary of each reign, there is a standing reference to the "Chronicles of the Kings of Judah" or of Israel.¹⁰ These, of course, are not our Books of Chronicles, which were written by one author long after the Exile, but the books prepared by the royal recorders, and which were doubtless profane history, detailing the military and other exploits of each king. The chronicler also refers to a number of works as authority for his narrative of Jewish history, as the words of Nathan, the words of Gad,¹¹ the prophecy of Ahijah, the visions of Iddo,¹² the seer, the words of Shemaiah,¹³ the commentary of the prophet Iddo.¹⁴

The reason why these sources have perished, while the Old Testament books have been preserved, is not accidental. We may say that the sources, so far as we can judge, were mostly of a secular character, hence when the nation that gave them birth passed away, they passed away with it. On the other hand the books of the Old Testament are of a distinctly religious character. While having their roots in the religion of Israel, through their forward look to the Messiah, they have a world-wide significance. Hence, although Israel went down as a nation, it survived as a religious people, and as the medium of God's revelation of redeeming love to the world. No one can study the Old Testament in a sympathetic spirit without finding in it a well-ordered preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ, nor do the established positions of modern criticism affect the essence of this preparation. They simply change the point of view, but every believer may see Jesus Christ coming into the world,¹⁵ in the Old Testament

¹ Genesis iv, 23-24.

² Genesis ix, 25-27.

³ Genesis xxvii, 27-29.

⁴ Numbers xxi, 14, 15.

⁵ Joshua x, 13; II. Samuel i, 18-27.

⁶ Joshua xxiv, 26.

⁷ I. Samuel x, 25.

⁸ II. Samuel viii, 16; I. Kings iv, 3; II. Kings xviii, 18.

⁹ I. Kings xi, 42.

¹⁰ I. Kings xiv, 19, xv, 7, 23-31.

¹¹ I. Chronicles xxix, 29.

¹² II. Chronicles ix, 29.

¹³ II. Chronicles xii, 15.

¹⁴ II. Chronicles xiii, 22.

¹⁵ Compare John i, 9 (Revised Version, margin).

Scriptures, whether he be traditionalist or modern critic. This fact, which admits of demonstration, not only sheds light upon the question as to the divine authorship of the Bible, but should also comfort those who deprecate any essential change of view as to the origin and composition of the Old Testament books.

From the human side, we must consider the origin of these books as providential. So far as the Old Testament, as a whole, is concerned, we may be assured that each book, whether prophecy or history, grew up out of some historical situation, and that each psalm was largely the record of some spiritual experience. But God's purpose, which man faintly apprehended, was that these books should live. As the revelation of his word they were endowed with immortality.

In our English Bibles, we have no indication of the process by which the various parts of the Old Testament were received as Scripture, except in respect to the Law. Nor do we get any help from Jewish tradition. Indeed, anyone who has even the most superficial acquaintance with the Mishna and Talmud, and sees how the whole body of oral tradition, as well as written law, is assigned to a revelation received by Moses from Mount Sinai, will be persuaded of the need of caution in dealing with Jewish tradition, which frequently originated in Jewish speculation and is merely an opinion.¹ Hence, modern scholars are almost unanimous in dismissing the Great Synagogue as a factor in our investigation regarding the formation of the Canon, because the details regarding it have been found to be the invention of a comparatively late Judaism. But we have a solid historical foundation, which hardly any critic questions, with regard to the formal promulgation and adoption of the Pentateuch, substantially as we now have it, in the time of Ezra, 444 B. C.

Even those critics who deny that Moses was the author of the entire Pentateuch do not necessarily deny that it contains most ancient documents. Nor does the modern critical theory require that we should suppose there is a single law in it which the writer did not accept as transmitted from the hand of Moses, nor a single narrative which he did not accept as actual history. The theory of an invention of laws for the benefit of a favored class, which were assigned to Moses, and of the fabrication of history is simply the result of a realistic view which cannot appreciate the development of oral law and tradition by the side of written law and history.

According to the traditional theory, the entire Pentateuch had existed since the time of Moses, but had been neglected, forgotten, and even lost² during long periods. According to the modern critical theory the book known as the Law of Moses³ was of much less extent and was

¹ The so-called oral law of Moses is preserved in the Mishna. In Pirke Aboth I, we read: "Moses received the [oral and written] law from Sinai and delivered it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets delivered it to the men of the Great Synagogue. These said three things: 'Be careful in judgment, and establish many disciples, and make a fence about the law.'" Compare the whimsical reasons given in the Talmud, *Baba Bathra*, 15a, b, on the basis of the comparison of quotations in Job with those in other Old Testament books, for suggesting the authorship of Job in the days of Moses, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, of the spies, of the Judges, of Ahasuerus, etc. The Rabbis get at this last result by quoting Job xlii, 15: "And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job," and calling attention to the search made for beautiful women in the time of Ahasuerus (Esther ii, 3); for the same reason it is suggested that Job was written in the time of David because they sought among the beautiful young virgins for a nurse (I. Kings i, 3).

² II. Kings xxii, 8; compare Succa 20a: "The Tora was forgotten by the Israelites, until Ezra went up from Babylon and reestablished it."

³ When we read the designation *Torath Moshe*—"Law of Moses"—(Joshua viii, 31, 32; I. Kings ii, 3; II. Kings xiv, 6, xxiii, 25), it does not necessarily indicate a legal system of the same extent as our Pentateuch. A good illustration of this is furnished by Gesenius' "Hebrew Grammar," of which twenty-five editions have already been issued. The first as well as the last edition is known by the same name. The oral teaching of Moses would be called *Torath Moshe*. The passages, therefore, that we find in the historical books and in Malachi iii, 22, which mention the Law of Moses (*Torath Moshe*) cannot be quoted as proving the existence of our Pentateuch at the time in question. They do prove, however, what we cannot doubt—that there could have been no Pentateuch, so far as we are acquainted with the history of Israel, without the divinely appointed mediatorship of Moses. He received a revelation which entirely changed the character of Israel's history. He is as truly the creator of the Pentateuch as Christ of the Gospels. His name and influence grew after his death. His teachings were reverently treasured up. The stream of written and unwritten law which flowed from him rightly bore his name. Unwritten laws bearing the impress of his spirit, modified to meet the needs of later times, especially in connection with the reestablishment

השותפין פרק ראשון

פפורת הש"פ

תרי בתרי כיני מונח משמע שעם עמודין היה היקפו ששה שאלם היה הקיפו בלא עמודין אס כן נפיש ליה משני ספקים נהדי עמודים: ורבי מאיר עמודין היכא הוו קיימי אע"פ שיש ריווח הרבה לר"מ בכל האורך לכד מנגד ספר תורה פשוט היה לו שהיו מונח' כנר ראש הארון ספר תורה מונח:

ולמאן דאמר אינו בימי משה היה וא"ת מאי קאמר ולמ"ד והאי

מנא נופיה כנר דבימי משה היה דקתני סיפ' משה כתב ספר אינו ויל' דאכתי לא ידע כיפא דכריית:

בפורענותא לא מתחילין וא"ת ונכתביה מיד אפר

דוד ואורי' משום שאמרת של דוד היה אפרית שיצא ממנה דוד שריוהו להק"ב כשירות ותושבחות לכך כתב אחר כך מיד אותן שירות והוא אפרית שלה וא"ת ולמ"ד משלי נולה היה לכתביה לאינו לכסוף ואורי' משום הכי כתבו כהדי תלי' ומשלי לפי שהיו מצניין אח' כתובין מעין שירה ומקראות קצרים וכינון אפר דניסיהם היה כינון כדאמרין ויקראו בכפר תורת אלהים מפורש ושום שכל מאי ושום שכל פבוקי טעמי' והא' לא כתבו אפר משלי משום שלא להפסיק בדברי שלמה ור"ת מפרש דלכן כתבו כהדי תלים משום דאמר לקמן דוד כתב ספרו על ידי עשרה וקנים ואינו נמי ככתב על ידי ארבע וקנים נוסף וכלרד ואליפו ולא היה והשתא א"ש שלא כתבו אפר משלי:

פורענות דאית ביה אפרית וא"ת אינו נמי אית ביה אפרית

ויל' דהאי אפרית דרית אפרית דכל ישראל ועוד דאיכ' למ"ד לא כלל הקנ"כ שכרו לא לטורדו מן העולם: ועל

שברי לוח' שמנהים בארון ואי"ס"ר ס"ח הקפול' טפחים מכרי כל שיש בהקפול' טפחים יש בו רוחב טפח וכיון דלאמצעיתו נגלל נפיש ליה מהרי טפח ריוחא דביני ביני בתרי פושבי היכי יהיב אמר רב אחא בר יעקב ספר עורה לתחלתו הוא נגלל ואכתי תרי בתרי היכי יהיב אמר רב אשי דכריך ביה פורת' וכרכי' לעיל ורבי יהורח מקמי רלי' ארגו ספר חורה היבא הוה יתיב דפא הוה נפיק מיניה ויתב עילויה ספר חורה ורבי מאיר האי מצד ארון מאי עביר ליה ההוא מיבעי ליה דמתנח ליה מצד ולא מתנח ביני רוחי וליעול' בגויה מן הצד ורבי מאיר עמודים היבא הוו קיימי מבראי ורבי מאיר שברי לוחות דמונחין בארון מנא ליה נפקא ליה כדרב הונא דאמר רב הונא מאי דכתי' אשר נקרא שם שם ה' צבאו' יושב הכרובי' עליו מלמד שלוחו ושברי לוחות מונחין בארון ואידך רהווא מיבעי ליה לכרפי' יוחנן דאמ' רבי יוחנן אמר רבי שמעון בן יוחאי מלמד שהשם וכל כיצומו מונחין בארון ואידך נמי מיבעי ליה לחכי אין הכי נמי אלא שברי לוחות דמונחין בארון מנא ליה נפקא ליה מדרגתי רבי יוסף דתני רבי יוסף' אשר שברת ושפת' מלמד שהלוחות ושברי לוחות כונתי' בארון ואידך ההוא מיבעי ליה לכרדיש לקיש דאמר ר"ל אשר שברת אמר לו חקדוש ברוך הוא למשה ישר כוחך ששברת לחורבן סדרן של נביאים יהושע ושופטי שמואל ומלכים ירמיה ויחזקאל ישעיה ושנים עשר מכרי הושע קרים דכתי' תחלת דברה' בהושע וכי

עם הושע דבר תחלה והלא משה ועד הושע כמה נביאים היו א"ר יוחנן שהיה תחלת לארבע נביאים שנתנבאו באותו הפר' ואלו הן הושע וישעיה עמוס ומיכה וליקדמיה' להושע ברישא כיון דכתיב נבואתיה גבי חגי זכריה ומלאכי וחגי זכריה ומלאכי סוף נביאים הוו חשיב ליה בהדיהו וליכתביה לחוריה וליקדמיה איירי דושר מירכס מכרי ישעיה קרים מירמיה ויחזקאל וליקדמיה לישעיה ברישא כיון דמלכים סיפיה חורבנ' וירמיה כוליה חורבנא ויחזקאל רישיה חורבנ' וסיפיה נחמתא וישעיה כוליה נחמתא המכין חורבנא להורבנא ונחמתא לנחמתא:

סידרן של כתובים רות וספר תהלים ואיוב ומשלי קהלת שיר השירים וקינוח דניאל ומגילת אסתר יצא ודברי הימים ולמאן דאמר איוב בימי משה היה ליקרפי' לאינו' ברישא אהחולי בפורענותא לא מתחילין רות נמי פורענות היא פורענות דאית ליה אחריר' דא"ר יוחנן למח נקרא שמה רות שיצא ממנה דוד שריוהו להקדוש ברוך הוא בשירות ותושבחות ומי כתבן משח כתב ספרו ופרשת בלעם ואיוב יהושע כתב ספרו ושמונה פסוקין שכתורה שמואל כתב ספרו ושופטים ורות דוד כתב ספר רחלים על ידי עשרה וקנים על ידי ארבע וקנים על ידי מלבי צדק ועל ידי אברהם ועל ידי משה ועל ידי ירמיה ועל ידי ירמיה ועל ידי אסף ועל ידי

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לאדוני וכל המומצ' כדאמר לקמן איתן האורשי' וה אנרס: ועי' משה תפל' למשה וכל אפר עמודי' כסדרן: ועי' הימן משכיל' להימן: ועי' ידותן למנצח לידותן:

שברי לוחות שמונחין תחת הלוחות: יש בו רוחב טפח וזה שהקיפו ששה נחמא עובי רוסכו שני טפחי': ריוחא דביני ובני אור שנין עמוד לעמוד: וכתרי פושבי היכי יתיב דקתני נשתיירו שס שני טפחי' ששס ב' דמונח: ספר עורה ספר שכתב משה וכו' קורין בעשרה פרשת המלך בהקדל' וכן תור' אור גדול ב"ה: לתחלתו הוא נגלל אין לו לא עמוד אפר ונגלל מתחילתו לסופו:

דכריך ביה כזרתא שאינו נוללו כולו ומניס בו מקצת וכורכו לפעמו ומניס אותו הכרך עב' הספר מלמעלה: וכורכי' לשל וכו' וכו' למעלה על ההיקף: דמנח ליה מצד אגל הכותל ולא בין שני הלוחות: היכא קיימי כיון דמכריך טפח מכאן נטפח מכאן כרוח' הארון שלא יהא פ"ט יוצא וכנכס כדוסק העמודין היכ' מניס הלא יתפטו את הפלג' שס שס תרי ומניס כתיבי ללוחות ושכרי לוחות: אשר שברת קרא יתירא הוא למכמכי' לושממס לדרשא: יישר כוחך ללמדך שהוא מן הדברים ששה משה רבינו פ"ה מדעמו והסכימה דעמו לדעת המקו': שנתנבאו באותו הסרך בימי אומם המלכים עזריה יתס אסו יסוקיה כאלכסיה נביאים הללו כמות כח' מן פמיכה שלא היה בימי מויהו אכל' היה בימי יתס אסו יסוקיה: פני זכריה ומלאכי סוכס של נביאים שכן היו בזית שני בשנת שנים לדרוש הארון: ישעיה קדים לירמיה ויסוקא שרי ישעיה בימי עזריה וירמיה בימי יאשיה וכניו נתנבא בירושל' ויסוקא בגולה בימי דקדיה: רות תלים אינו כו' רות קדמה בימי השופטים תלים דוד אפר והוא קדם לאינו כו' ד בימי מלכות שכל היה ואס"כ שלשה כפר שלמ' משלי קסלת שניס ספר כמח שיר השירים כר' כסיני שאמר לעת וקנתו: קינות ינסות ס"ב ירמיה אפר שהוא אפר שלמה דניאל שנת יפ' מל אפר ירמיה' בימי נבוכד נר בגולה אפר

אפריו בימי אססורוש שרא בימי דרוש השני שפחד אפר אססורוש: למ"ד אינו בימי מלכות לקמן: רות נמי פורענות היא רעב ונולות ומיתת אלימלך וכניו: דאית ליה אפרית סוף הפורענות נהפך לאפרית ותקו' שיצא דוד משם: ופרשת בלעם נבואתו ומשלי אע"פ שאינו' בורכי' משה ותורתו וסדר מעשיו: שמואל פסוקי' מן וימת משה עד סוף הספר: שמואל כתב ספרו וספר שופטים שהולס קדמו לו ועמד וכתב ספרו ומה העלפה לישראל בייעהם וכן אפר שסיסה בימי השופטים: על ידי עשרה וקני' כתב כו' דכרי' שאמר' וקנים הללו שניו לפניו ויש שהיו בימיו כנון אסף והימן וידותן מן הלוחים הסעוררים: עי' אדם הראשון כנון גולמי ראובני' ולי' מה יקרו ריעיך אדם הראשון אמרן: עי' מלבי נדק כלס' ה' להימן:

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A FACSIMILE OF FOLIO 14b OF BABA BATHRA OF THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD, AMSTERDAM EDITION, 1644, FROM THE LIBRARY OF PROFESSOR CURTISS.

In the central text, four lines from the bottom, begins the famous passage: "Moses wrote his book, and the section about Balaam and Job," etc. Slightly enlarged from the original.

enlarged at different periods until substantially the final edition was issued by Ezra. The narrative of his labors in its introduction shows that from 444 B. C. it became a most powerful factor in the life of the people. It was no longer a book of which there were perhaps one or two copies, but we may believe that through the scribes many copies came into existence. Hence we find religious observance and private life substantially in harmony with its precepts from the time of Ezra, so far as we can trace the history.

We come now to the second division of the Old Testament, the "Prophets." Prophecy is oftentimes spoken of as revealed history. This is substantially the view of the traditionalists. It involves the necessity of proving either that everything foretold in the Old Testament will literally come to pass, or at least in a spiritual sense. From this point of view there can be but two opinions regarding prophecy: (1) That the predictions of the prophets will have an objective reality, even in all the details of the Messianic kingdom; or (2) that the fulfillment of these predictions is to be real, though spiritual, as in the case of the Revelator's description of the new Jerusalem.

The theory of evangelical modern critics does not differ essentially from the latter view. It insists, however, that prophecy was first a living voice addressed to a real congregation of men and women, before it became a book, designed for future generations, and that the power of Old Testament prophecy even now is not so much in its character as divine foreknowledge, as in its ability to reach the conscience of men in every age. At the same time its portrayals of the future have as much objective value as the visions of the seer on Patmos. They are preëminently ideals, drawn in magnificent and shadowy outlines, rather than exact literal descriptions of future events.

After the Exile prophecy began to die out until with the prophet Malachi its voice was hushed. So long as an Isaiah or Jeremiah was raised up to speak to the people and teach them through the living voice, the writings of the prophets may have had no extensive influence, but when prophecy ceased and the history of the people proved the divine mission of the prophets, there was a demand for their writings. This demand was particularly felt during the Exile and especially after the official introduction of the Pentateuch by Ezra, when a new order, the scribes, became a power in the religious life of the people.

The prophets had been preachers of righteousness. Neither their promises nor their threatenings, in the divine plan, were considered absolute predictions, for their object was to bring the people to repentance and to avert the impending doom. Jeremiah expresses this clearly when he reports God as saying: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy it; if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them."¹ The same principle is illustrated in the preaching of Jonah: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."² This message led to repentance, for we read: "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not." Jeremiah too had the repentance of his fellow countrymen in view when he dictated his prophecy to Baruch.³ The rebuke and reformation of their Israelitish contemporaries was the great work to which the prophets were called.⁴ In the effort to bring about this

of the Jewish state under Ezra, may have been finally embodied in the original collection which was known as the Law of Moses. Such a theory does not require us to suppose that Ezra, who "was a ready scribe in the Law of Moses" (Ezra vii, 6), invented new laws, which he ascribed to Moses. We have rather to suppose that he codified laws, written and oral, which were known as the Tora of Moses, and that in this he was as truly inspired as the great lawgiver.

¹ Jeremiah xviii, 7-10. ² Jonah iii, 4b. ³ Jeremiah xxxvi, 1-7.

⁴ Even Isaiah vi, 10, does not furnish an exception; compare i, 18, 19, ii, 5, etc.

reformation these inspired preachers used promise and threatening. The prediction of the birth of the Messiah from a virgin¹ was divinely evoked by Isaiah's effort to dissuade King Ahaz from having recourse to the Assyrian king, Tiglath-Pileser III., in his fear of the Syro-Ephraimitic league. So whatever may be our theory as to the authorship of Isaiah xl-lxvi the main and primary object of the book is to prepare the Babylonian exiles for a return to their native land. It is true that the predictions thus called forth have a far wider sweep, but we shall fail to understand them if we do not regard them as first addressed to an actual congregation with a special end in view.

It is necessary that we should fix this fact firmly in mind, that we may properly understand the second division of the Old Testament, called in the Hebrew Bible "the Prophets." This embraces the "Former" and "Latter Prophets." The Former Prophets include Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings; the Latter Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve Minor Prophets. An examination of the historical books named shows that they were not given for the sake of history, but history is used by the prophetic writers just as promise and threatening are used by prophetic preachers to produce the reformation of the people.² This object stands in the foreground more than the use of exact history, or than definite fulfillment. The chief thing, then, in prophetic writing and preaching is not mere historic accuracy, or the literal fulfillment of every detail of prophecy, but the effort of the prophets is to lead their contemporaries to repentance. The prophet's use of history, considering the limitations of ancient writers, is singularly good; and there are instances of startling fulfillments of prophecy, but the most remarkable thing is that the prophet, whether as preacher or historian, builds better than he knows. While conscious that he is especially inspired of God to speak and write, we are not to suppose that he is aware of the important place that his prophecy is to fill in the Old Testament, or in the history of Christianity. He may have foregleams of the permanent significance of his ministry,³ but he is simply a laborer on the building of the Old Testament. God alone is the architect. A divine power is controlling the prophet's preaching and writing, and in a supernatural way is making his ministry, as inspired author and preacher, a preparation for the coming of Christ and Christianity. This is not natural, but supernatural, and it is a more conspicuous evidence of the presence of the divine Spirit in the prophets than any amount of scientific history, or of detailed foretelling of future events. God is indeed able to cause his servants in their preaching to use nothing but exact history and not to promise or threaten anything which is not literally to come to pass. Yet we can say with equal emphasis, that even if such a use of history and prophecy cannot be proved to have insured entire accuracy of statement and fulfillment, as the critics claim, nothing less than divine power and foreknowledge could have so consistently controlled the Old Testament Scriptures as a preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ. I emphasize this point because it has a most important bearing on the origin and authority of the "Prophets," or the second division of the Canon.

The "Former Prophets" are largely based on ancient documents,⁴ but the motive of their authors, as has been said, was not so much to convey a mere chronicle of the times, for which they so often refer to official records,⁵ as it was to instruct the people from the examples of the past. They wished to accomplish the same results through history as through preaching. Indeed, they made a homiletical use of history. There is every reason to believe that they were honest in their use of materials, but they doubtless employed whatever sources were at hand which seemed to them credible and which were adapted to their purpose. It is certain that the materials they employed, and the way in which they employed them, furnished a

¹ Isaiah vii, 14. The Hebrew *alma* signifies maiden; *bethulah* is the specific word for virgin.

² Examples are furnished in Judges ii, 11-23, iii, 7-12, iv, 1-2, and often; compare II. Kings xvii, 7-23.

³ I. Peter i, 12. ⁴ I. Kings xi, 41. ⁵ I. Kings xv, 29, and often.

fitting vehicle for the transmission of God's revealed truth to the age with which they had to do.

It was, then, this character of these books, which were regarded as a practical application of the law and as containing so much religious history and fulfillment, that led the Jewish congregation, at least 150 years after the adoption of the Pentateuch as Scripture, to receive the "Prophets" also, both "Former" and "Latter," as books full of warning and instruction to the people. It was thus that the second division of the Canon was undoubtedly formed. It was not in any sense a mere survival of the fittest Hebrew literature, but histories and prophecies had been prepared by prophets, named and nameless, under the direct and conscious superintendence of God's Spirit; not at first as parts of the "Prophets," for this was the design of the Divine Spirit, rather than of the authors, but being thus prepared under such superintendence they came to be recognized by the Old Testament Church at their real value, though not as we can prove at any known date.

As we have seen the distinctive character of the first two divisions of the Old Testament is indicated by their names, "Law," "Prophets." The designation of the general and miscellaneous character of the last division, "Writings," is not less explicit. It includes: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticles,¹ Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. These may be further grouped as follows: (1) The Book of Psalms which is the hymn book of the ancient Jewish Church. This collection, which, even according to Calvin, was probably not complete until the time of Maccabees, and hence was at least 800 years in the process of formation, beginning with the time of David, must have been subject to much rearrangement and editing before it was finally divided into five books. (2) Another group of writings is found in Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. These are an outgrowth of what is known as the Wisdom Literature which had its origin in the time of King Solomon, and which continued until long after the Exile. (3) Canticles and Lamentations may also be connected together as examples of the joyful and plaintive elements of Hebrew poetry, although perhaps the combination of Job and Canticles as examples of dramatic poetry is even better. At the same time, they form an admirable contrast in their subject matter, for Job represents a man as subject to a supreme test, and Canticles a helpless maiden as withstanding the seductions of the most powerful monarch of Israel and remaining true to her shepherd lover. (4) Ruth and Esther furnish points of contact in their sporadic character and in the contrast which is furnished between the tender idyl of Ruth and the fierce tragedy of Esther. (5) Daniel has no special connection with any book of the Writings. We are not to suppose that the Jews made any mistake in placing this book in the third division of the Old Testament. It would seem to indicate their conviction regarding its late character. (6) Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles are really the work of one author, who rewrites the history of Israel only with reference to the Southern Kingdom and from a priestly point of view.

It is thus easy to see how the miscellaneous character of the books in the third division of the Old Testament should have led to the choice of the name Writings as a designation for the collection; how the Jews should have assigned an inferior grade of inspiration to it, and how in the Septuagint Version apochryphal additions have found a place in connection with the books of this division. And yet the Old Testament would be deprived of its most precious jewels if this division were struck from the Canon, for we have no more spiritual utterances in any part of the Bible than are found in the Psalms. Hence the divine wisdom is manifested in the gathering and preservation of these books, which, as a whole, bear abundant evidence of the inspiration of the Divine Spirit. We are to lay emphasis on the total impression made by this collection rather than upon seeming incongruities which appear here and there.

The question may now be raised how we know that we have the original thirty-nine, or

¹ Another name for Song of Solomon.

Slightly reduced from the original.

according to the Hebrew reckoning twenty-four, books.¹ We cannot put too much dependence on the account given in II. Maccabees as to the formation of a divine library by Nehemiah,² for the source is not in a book that is entirely trustworthy. We cannot infer that the books of the Old Testament were all collected and acknowledged as of binding character in the time of Nehemiah. This is a common view, but its only foundation is the shifting sand of unsupported hypothesis. The earliest clear testimony which we have regarding the three divisions of the Old Testament is from the grandson of Jesus Sirach in his prologue to the book written by his grandfather. This clearly shows that in the year 132 B. C. there was a threefold division of the Old Testament such as we have in our Hebrew Bibles. We cannot say that the collection had been rigidly closed at that time, although we suppose it was essentially complete.

Philo, who wrote 20 A. D., quotes from all the Old Testament books except Ezekiel, Daniel, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and Esther. His neglect in quoting from these books does not indicate that they were not in existence, but simply that he had no need to make use of them.

Jesus Christ definitely refers to three divisions of the Old Testament as the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms,³ and the New Testament writers make use of all the Old Testament books, except Ezra, Ecclesiastes, Canticles, and Esther. Christ himself in another way seems to indicate the entire Old Testament Canon in a reference to Abel as the first martyr mentioned in the first book of the Hebrew Bible, including all the prophets to Zechariah, mentioned in Chronicles, the last book of the Hebrew Bible.⁴ At least this quotation seems confirmatory rather than accidental.

The Jews did not officially recognize the Old Testament as Scripture until the council at Jamnia about the year 90 A. D., but the fact of highest importance for the Christian world is that Christ and the New Testament writers recognize substantially our Old Testament as Scripture. This fact, whatever may be proved by the critics, as to the origin and composition of the Old Testament books, is the inspired judgment of him whose authority the Church receives as supreme.

¹ The Minor Prophets were reckoned as one book. Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra (including Nehemiah) as each one. This leaves twenty-four books. It is often supposed that the number twenty-two, corresponding to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, was secured by reckoning Judges and Ruth as one book, and Jeremiah and Lamentations as one, but this is not certain.

² II. Maccabees ii, 13, "And the same things also were reported in the records, namely, the memoirs of Neemias; and how he, founding a library, gathered together the books concerning the kings and prophets, and those of David, and epistles of Kings concerning holy gifts."

³ Luke xxiv, 44.

⁴ Compare Luke xi, 51, with Genesis iv, 9, 10; II. Chronicles xxiv, 20-22.

CHAPTER III.

THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

WE come now to the languages used in the transmission of the original text of the Old Testament books. These books have been preserved to us almost entirely in Hebrew; a few sections only being in Aramaic, commonly, but erroneously known as Chaldee.

The Hebrew language belongs to the Semitic group of languages, which found their home from the Mediterranean on the west to the Tigris and beyond on the east, from the mountains of Armenia on the north to the coast of the Arabian wilderness on the south. The term Semitic comes from Shem, who is called the ancestor of the Shemites, or Semites; but Semitic languages were also spoken by people who were not of Semitic origin. The ancient Babylonian and the Assyrian languages were Semitic; the Arameans, commonly called Syrians, whose capital was Damascus, spoke a Semitic language; the Phœnicians on the Mediterranean seacoast, the Philistines to the south of them, the Moabites, the Edomites, the Ammonites, and the Arabians, all spoke Semitic languages. Hebrew and Phœnician were simply dialects of the same language, and it seems certain that Hebrews, Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites could easily understand each other. There is never any indication of an interpreter being employed between these peoples, and we may believe they could communicate as freely as Swedes and Norwegians do to-day.

A study of Hebrew clearly shows that it was not the primitive language as some used to imagine. Indeed, a large class of roots seems to indicate that it passed through a monosyllabic and mimetic stage. Its grammatical structure represents at least centuries of development. The best suggestion of the original Semitic language, from which the various tongues mentioned are derived, is found in the Arabic. It is only a suggestion, however, and not the original language itself. Modern grammatical study of Hebrew has shown, in connection with great simplicity of construction, remarkable power and beauty of expression.

As a written language we cannot show that we possess any memorials of it before the time of Moses. None of the sister languages in Palestine have left monuments as ancient as those found in the Hebrew. The oldest is the Moabite Stone from the ninth century B. C.¹ No Phœnician inscriptions have been discovered from an earlier date than about the sixth century B. C. If, however, we turn to Assyria we find a document, according to Hommel, that dates from the fourth millennium B. C.

There are twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet. All these are consonants, although four of them came to be employed to indicate vowels before specific signs of vowels were invented by the Massoretes. The mistaken opinion once prevailed that the vowel signs, in accordance with Jewish tradition, might be traced back to the time of Ezra or even to Moses and as received from Sinai.² This position was regarded as essential, both by Jews and Christians, to the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Old Testament, for without the vowels one set of consonants might have several different meanings. But the truth prevailed. It was proved beyond a peradventure, that the vowel points were invented during the time of the Massoretes (600-1000 A. D.) when the traditional meaning of the words was in danger of being forgotten. So long as Hebrew was a living language there was no real difficulty about understanding the meaning of words even when written only with consonants. While the vowel signs, invented

¹ For a representation and description of this stone see p. 541.

² Grætz, "*Geschichte der Juden*," Leipzig, 1877, Vol. IX, p. 214.

by the Massoretes, have a fixed value, the pronunciation of them differs greatly, so that it is quite likely that the modern Jew, whether Polish or Spanish, would have great difficulty in understanding Isaiah.

The alphabet in Hebrew has passed through various stages. There is more difference between Hebrew letters, as seen on the Moabite Stone¹ and on the Siloam inscription of the time of Hezekiah,² than there is between Old German and modern English. While some scholars are inclined to derive the Hebrew alphabet from the ancient hieroglyphics of the Assyrians, more favor its derivation from the hieratic characters of the Egyptians by the Phœnicians. These hieratic characters were formed by the Egyptian priests from the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians, which consist of outlines of various natural objects. These outlines can still be traced in the hieratic characters by the practiced eye, although the transition to letters is complete. These letters are thought to have been still further transformed by the Phœnicians, so that they resemble the characters which we find on the Moabite Stone. These characters, more or less modified, were doubtless used in the transcription of the Old Testament books until after the time of Ezra. Their essential character is still preserved in the Samaritan alphabet, and this may be the reason why the Jews finally introduced the square characters, found in a modernized form in Hebrew Bibles and manuscripts, as the Hebrews were probably unwilling to use the same characters for writing as the Samaritans.

The consonantal form of the text was easily read by the Jewish scribes on account of their entire familiarity with the original until the knowledge of Hebrew began to decay. Then vowel letters were introduced and finally special signs were gradually invented by the Massoretes to indicate the vowels, the place of the tone syllables, the punctuation and the musical cadence to be observed in the worship of the synagogue. While most of the books of the Old Testament were written in Hebrew, after the Exile certain passages were written in Aramaic. This language goes back to a remote antiquity. One Aramaic word is preserved in the parting of Jacob and Laban.³ Even Jacob himself is called an Aramean.⁴ In the course of time Aramaic became the language of commerce, like the French language a hundred years ago. It was closely related to the Hebrew, although it could not be understood by the common people in the time of Isaiah."⁵ As the language of interchange, with the Jews and their enemies, after the Exile, the king of the Persian empire sends and receives letters in the Aramaic language. These are quoted in the Book of Ezra. A part of Daniel is also composed in the same language. After the Exile and in the time of Christ, Aramaic had completely displaced the Hebrew as the language of the country. Jesus himself, so far as the New Testament furnishes evidence, spoke in Aramaic, which is inaccurately called Hebrew.⁶ When he said *Talitha cumi*, "maid arise,"⁷ *Ephphatha*, "he opened,"⁸ and *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"⁹ Aramaic words were on his lips. From this prevalent use of Aramaic arose the necessity, as we shall see later, of an Aramaic interpretation of the Hebrew passages read in the synagogue.

¹ See p. 541.

² See plate on opposite page.

³ Genesis xxxi, 47.

⁴ Deuteronomy xxvi, 5.

⁵ II. Kings xviii, 26.

⁶ John xix, 13, 18. Gabbatha and Golgotha are both Aramaic forms.

⁷ Mark v, 41.

⁸ Mark vii, 34.

⁹ Matthew xxvii, 46.

Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely representing a musical score or a form of shorthand. The text is arranged in several lines across the page.

Handwritten text at the bottom right corner:

Handwritten text at the bottom left corner:

THE SILOAM INSCRIPTION, REPRESENTING THE FORM OF HEBREW LETTERS IN THE TIME OF HEZEKIAH.

CHAPTER IV.

HISTORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT TEXT.

WHEN we consider the written transmission of the Old Testament text we discover that we have no Hebrew manuscript which can be positively proved to be older than the "*Codex Petropolitanus*," preserved in the Imperial Library of St. Petersburg, which dates from the year 916 A. D. and contains only the Latter Prophets. At the first blush it may seem strange that while we have manuscripts of the New Testament dating back to the fourth century of our era no ancient manuscripts should be in existence of the Old Testament. We shall find that there are good reasons for this, and that after all it is not a serious element in the problem, if we are content with an essential inspiration of the Old Testament. All the converging lines of testimony, as drawn from what we know of the origin of the Old Testament books and their transmission, will, I think, show that while we have abundant evidence of the essential inspiration of the Old Testament, we are not in a position to prove more.

We shall divide the history of the Old Testament text into three periods: that of the scribes, 444 B. C. to 70 A. D.; that of the Talmudists, 70 to 600 A. D.; that of the Massoretes, 600 to 1000 A. D.

To begin with the first division of the Bible, the Law, we have two first-class witnesses to the condition of the text of the Pentateuch in the first period. One of these dates back at the latest to the time of Ezra.¹ It is the Samaritan Pentateuch. The enmity which existed between the Hebrews and the Samaritans excludes the idea that the Samaritan text has been affected by that of Hebrew manuscripts, hence it becomes an independent witness to a text, which in all that is vital, barring such changes as have been made from the standpoint of the Samaritan religion and many minor differences, is one and the same in all essentials with the Hebrew.

Another witness within 200 years of the time of Ezra is found in the text of the Septuagint, or Greek version, which was prepared in Alexandria to meet the wants of the Jewish congregation there in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-247 B. C.).² While this text has been subject to disturbing influences, especially since the time of (Origen 185-254 A. D.), whose efforts at improving it by placing different versions in parallel columns only served to corrupt it, as these versions in the process of time became more or less mixed, it is in all essential respects a mirror of the Hebrew text of the Pentateuch as it existed about 250 B. C. The critic does, indeed, find some points of difference between the Hebrew, as we have it in the Massoretic text, and as it existed in the ancient text from which this Greek version was made, especially in the arrangement and codification of laws in Exodus xxxv-xl, which easily give the impression of an edition, differing from that in our Hebrew Bibles, and at least of some freedom on the part of the ancient Jewish Church in dealing with the text, although its essential character is in no respect affected.

With regard to the remaining two divisions of the Old Testament, the Prophets and the Writings, we have only the witness of the Septuagint version, which was prepared by many persons, and was not completed until about 150 B. C. While this translation is of varying

¹ The traditionalists maintain that the Samaritans inherited the Pentateuch from the ten northern tribes whom they succeeded.

² The interesting fable regarding the translation of a magnificent copy of the Law for the Alexandrian Library, under the fostering care of Ptolemy Philadelphus, at the suggestion of Demetrius, by seventy-two Jewish scholars, on the Island of Pharos, need not detain us. While the name of the version, Septuagint or Seventy, came from this story, it may first have been written down after the Law had long been orally interpreted in Greek to Alexandrian Jews in their synagogues.

degrees of excellence, due perhaps in some cases to the translators' imperfect knowledge of Hebrew, and while some passages are omitted, as in Samuel,¹ and the prophecy of Jeremiah appears with a somewhat different arrangement of chapters, and is abbreviated in the Greek version, so that there are 2,700 words less in Greek than in our present Hebrew text, and on the other hand there are additions,² there is no question that we have a witness who would be admitted in any court as corroborating in every essential particular the language, facts, and doctrines of these Old Testament books. Indeed, our Lord and his disciples honored this translation, which was current in Palestine, by making the great bulk of their quotations from it. In view of the differences which exist between this version and the Hebrew, and the agreement in all essential respects, we may perhaps get light as to the relative value which we should put on the spirit of the Old Testament as distinguished from its letter. It may be conceived of as bearing the same relation as the soul to the body.

In the second period of the transmission of the text (70-600 A. D.) we have at least eight witnesses — not to introduce others — all more or less independent of each other. Of these the Talmud, which is composed of the "Mishna" (edited 220 A. D.) — repetition of the Law — in the center; and the Gemara or commentary, which long existed orally before it was written down in its Babylonian (365-427 A. D.) and Jerusalem (390 A. D.) editions, is through its quotations an early and valuable witness to the essential character of the Old Testament books. Its testimony in this respect is not affected by such variations as may be found in it, due to a lapse of memory or even to the existence of a different text, while its directions with reference to the transmission of the Law, as we shall see when we come to consider the manuscripts, show a conscientious anxiety to preserve all the characteristics of the consonantal text.

The Targums, especially the Targum of Onkelos,³ which is limited to the Pentateuch, are also valuable witnesses, although on account of the theological bias, which is found in all of them, and their character as paraphrases, and in some cases almost as commentaries, with the exception of that of Onkelos which is usually a literal translation, they need to be used with the utmost caution. They are in Aramaic, and, so far as they run parallel, existed for centuries as the oral interpretation of the Law. Everything was done to impress the people that they were not the Scripture itself. The interpreter, called Meturgeman, who stood beside the reader of the Law might be blind or wear ragged garments, as if to throw reproach on his office, and his interpretation was not permitted to be written down lest it should be regarded as Scripture. But in the Targum of Onkelos, and the first Jerusalem Targum, aside from the paraphrase, the language of the Pentateuch has been preserved in such a way as to show that there must have been a fixed text. The Targums on the other divisions of the Old Testament, however, are of far less value for determining the text.

Three Greek translations from the Hebrew text, made in the second century, deserve mention here as independent witnesses, although only inconsiderable fragments of them have come down to us. Nevertheless, they are of importance, because they tend to confirm the general characteristics of the Hebrew original. Discontent with the Septuagint version, owing to a reaction against it, because it became such a weapon against Judaism in the hands of the Christians,⁴ prepared the way for the slavishly literal rendering of the Jewish proselyte Aquila (first half of second century A. D.). Theodotion (before 160 A. D.) attempted to revise the Septuagint in accordance with the Hebrew text. Although his knowledge of Hebrew was very superficial his testimony is also of value for our purpose. To this we may add the translation of Symmachus, made in the same century, who mediates between the slavish

¹ The Septuagint omits I. Samuel xvii, 12-31, 55, xviii, 1-5.

² *E. g.*, the LXX. changes Genesis iv, 8, so that it reads: "And Cain said unto Abel, his brother, let us go into the field."

³ "Edited about the end of the third century A. D."—Deutsch.

⁴ "The day when the Septuagint was made was considered a day of distress like the one on which the golden calf was cast, and was actually entered among the fast days."—Deutsch.



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A FACSIMILE OF A LEAF OF THE UTRECHT PSALTER. IN UNCIAL LETTERS, FROM
 A COPY IN THE LIBRARY OF PROFESSOR CURTISS.

Ps. cv, 1-20.

Reduced nearly one-third from the original.

exactness of Aquila and the superficial scholarship of Theodotion. The Old Latin versions which were current before the time of Jerome and which became very corrupt, because they were not in high repute, are of no special significance in this connection, as they are based on the Septuagint. We have another important witness from the second century in the Syriac version, called the Peshitto—that is simple, or for the common people. The Old Testament is the work of several translators, and is in the main a careful rendering from an original Hebrew which corresponds to our Massoretic text. We cite one more witness of highest standing, Jerome. He was the most learned man that the Church afforded for many centuries. He had enjoyed a careful classical training and after arriving at Bethlehem, where he lived thirty-four years, he perfected his knowledge of Hebrew through the instructions of a Jew who came to him by night that both of them might be free from suspicion. He began his translation in the year 392 A. D., and finished it in twelve years. In this work he had the assistance of some most eminent Jewish scholars, at great expense, which is supposed to have been met by his devoted friend Paula, a noble Roman lady. If we take his translation as a mirror of the Hebrew text of his time, we find that it does not differ from the Massoretic in important respects, although its agreement is not perfect. Nevertheless we must remember that his translation was subject to certain corrupting influences which came through the manuscript copies of the Old Latin renderings of the Septuagint.

Now, if we consider the testimony of our witnesses we shall find that for all practical purposes they really supply the place of Hebrew manuscripts in the Talmudical period. While they furnish data to the Old Testament text critic for his work, they agree in representing a text, during that period, which does not differ in any essential elements from that exhibited in the manuscripts of the following Massoretic period.

CHAPTER V.

ROLLS AND MANUSCRIPTS.

WE consider the history of manuscripts in connection with the Massoretic period (600-1000 A. D.). While, as we have seen, Assyrian memorials have come down from 4000 B. C., and the most extensive literature on clay tablets, and a profusion of fragile papyrus rolls have been found in Egypt, some of which reach back to the third millennium B. C., and more recently an extensive correspondence between Palestine and Egypt, in the Assyrian characters of the Tel el-Amarna Tablets, about the year 1500 B. C., not one manuscript remains of the Old Testament, which we can affirm with certainty is older than the tenth century A. D.

For this there must be sufficient reasons stronger than the perils through which the Jewish manuscripts passed at the hands of their enemies;¹ one of these reasons is really in the living character of the Old Testament, as a collection of sacred books for Jews and Christians, while the memorials mentioned are simply like the petrified remains of extinct peoples; another is in the stereotyped character of the text, in the time of the Massoretes and perhaps of the Talmudists, which doubtless occasioned the destruction of all manuscripts containing a variant text, and a superstitious reverence for their sacred books, which led the Jews to bury ancient and defaced rolls and manuscripts. From their point of view manuscripts containing other readings were to be destroyed, new clean manuscripts were better than old and soiled ones.

The Hebrew word for book was really more flexible than ours. It could be applied to a

¹ I. Maccabees i, 56, iii, 48; compare Taanit, iv, 7.



A FACSIMILE OF AN ESTHER ROLL, FROM THE LIBRARY OF PROFESSOR CURTISS

Esther i, 1-11.

Reduced about one-third from the original.

letter,¹ or a treatise of less than a page.² It seems to indicate the ordinary material on which writing was made, as a preparation of skins. There are two accounts in the Old Testament which indicate that certain parts of it were preserved in a monumental way. The Ten Commandments were inscribed on tables of stone,³ and after the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan, Joshua is said to have inscribed a part of Deuteronomy on plaster.⁴ There is no mention of papyrus, or of clay tablets as used in the transmission of the Old Testament Text,⁵ but the roll is mentioned many times, especially in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.⁶ Probably in a very literal sense, which we usually fail to recognize, the Old Testament was a library. The Pentateuch, on account of its extent, was rolled around two sticks, according to the custom which we know to have prevailed for centuries among the Jews,⁷ although it may also have been preserved without the sticks; other books may have been rolled around one stick, or even preserved without. Probably one roll was often used for each of the larger books of the Old Testament. If the entire Old Testament was found in the synagogue in the time of Christ, not to mention other books, it might contain a library of many rolls.⁸ Before the invention of parchment, rules for the manufacture of which are given in the Talmud, the skins of clean animals were used. Rolls of such a description, made from goat skins, may be seen in the University library of Cambridge, England.

At what period the rolls of the Old Testament were gathered in more convenient book form we cannot tell. The custom of the Romans must have had an influence upon the Jews. At any rate we find evidence in the Talmud of the existence of manuscripts of the Old Testament in book form.⁹ It is not unlikely that the Jews began to preserve their sacred books in this way not very long after the beginning of the Christian era.

While we have found evidence of even more freedom in the transmission of the Old Testament text in the time of the scribes (444 B. C.—70 A. D.) than is apparent in the transmission of the New Testament books, the attitude of the Talmudists toward the Old Testament shows a reverence which precludes the idea of their attempting anything but its most careful transmission, so far as the resources of the time allowed. This attitude did not exclude an elementary kind of text criticism, as we learn that in the case of a disputed reading the Rabbis consulted three manuscripts. As they found two in agreement against the third they adopted the reading of the two.¹⁰ They counted how many words, verses and letters there were in the whole Bible and in different sections of it;¹¹ they gave special attention to all that was characteristic of manuscripts that were considered correct. All these matters during the Talmudical period were handed down by tradition. Their view of the sacredness of Scripture prevented them wittingly from taking any liberties with the text. Even the tanning of the skins to be used for the preservation of the Scriptures was regarded as a religious act, which, if omitted, made the product of the tannery illegal for this sacred purpose.¹² So, too, the scribe must consciously recognize that his work was for the glory of God.¹³ Even the most celebrated Rabbi, who knew the Jewish Law by heart, might not presume to write one letter from memory.¹⁴ He must have an authentic copy before him. This attitude of the Talmudists toward the Law, which they regarded as the holy of holies, and in general toward the rest of the books of the Old Testament, especially the Prophets, taken in connection with the other sources which we have mentioned for determining the text, makes it clear that even in this period the text of the Old Testament has been transmitted with a faithfulness which does not appertain to any Greek or Roman author, or even to such a comparatively modern work as Shakspeare.

When we reach the time of the Massoretes we find a system of rules observed for copying

¹ This usage is frequent. II. Samuel xi, 14, 15, etc.

² Genesis v.

³ Exodus xxxi, 18.

⁴ Deuteronomy xxvii, 2-8; Joshua viii, 30-32.

⁵ The tile used by Ezekiel, iv, 1-3, served a different purpose.

⁶ Jeremiah xxxvi, 14, 20, 23, 25-29, etc.

⁷ See the Baraita to *Baba Bathra*, 14.

⁸ It is recognized that the Old

Testament might be written on a small number of rolls, but still it had the form of a library.

⁹ See *Baba Bathra*, 13b.

¹⁰ *Sopherim* vi, 4

¹¹ *Qiddushin*, 30b.

¹² *Gittin*, 40b, 54b.

¹³ *Shabbath*, 144b.

¹⁴ *Megillah*, 18b.



A TORA ROLL FROM THE LIBRARY OF PROFESSOR CURTISS.

Ex. xxxviii, 18—xxxix, 1-12.

Reduced about one-third from the original.

the Pentateuch, and, to a modified extent, the other books of the Old Testament, which insured absolute accuracy in the transmission of the text so far as that is possible for the hand of man. While the various readings of a Ben Asher and Ben Naphtali are interesting to scholars, and the slight differences in readings, such as Baer presents in his text, are of service to the critic, they show conclusively, that practically, during the time of the Massoretes, there is but one text worth considering. If a demonstration were needed this has been furnished by Kennicott¹ and De Rossi,² whose labors, extending to the examination of hundreds of Hebrew manuscripts, show beyond a question one type among all classes of manuscripts.

When we examine the rules for the preparation of a synagogue roll of the Law and of manuscripts we see this could not be otherwise. It was considered meritorious that every Jew should prepare a copy of the Law, either by his own hand or through a scribe.³ Neither woman, child, servant, apostate, nor Gentile might engage in this sacred work.⁴ The skins were to be prepared from clean animals after a fixed recipe⁵ only by an orthodox Jew, who, before engaging in this work, had consecrated himself to it by repeating this formula: "I tan this skin on purpose that a roll of the Law may be written upon it." They were to be ruled with a hard piece of wood or iron that would not leave a colored mark.⁶ Exact directions were given as to the preparation of the ink.⁷ The letters of a word were to be uniform and not more than the breadth of a hair asunder, words were to be separated by the space of a small consonant;⁸ sections by the space of nine letters;⁹ books of the Pentateuch by the space of four vacant lines.¹⁰ The length of the lines was to be thirty letters, and every column of a roll was not to have more than sixty nor less than forty lines.⁹ The scribe while writing must follow an authentic copy. He might not even write the smallest letter, yodh, from memory. He must observe a special formula of consecration when he wrote the name of God. He must say: "I am ready to write the name of the Lord with mind and understanding." If he omitted this formula once the roll was unlawful. He must not dip his pen in ink to write the name, but must begin with the last letter of the preceding word. Nor might he recognize the greeting of the king of Israel while engaged in writing the name of God.¹¹ The following regulations were made regarding the correction of a roll. It must be revised in thirty days.¹² It might be corrected even though it had three inaccuracies in every column; "but if there were four mistakes in half or more of a number of columns, even though there were no other faults at all, then the roll might not be corrected and must consequently be buried,"¹³ or might be used in the schools for purposes of instruction. Rolls that were buried because decayed or unlawful must be placed in an earthen vessel and under the ground near the grave of some learned man.¹⁴ Only plain ink was allowed in the preparation of synagogue rolls, no gilding, and no illuminations such as were permitted in the manuscripts of the Old Testament.

The order observed in a preparation of ordinary manuscripts was as follows: the consonants were to be written first, afterward the vowels and accents, next the revision, then the massora or tradition regarding the text, the lesser between the columns, of which there might be several according to the width of the manuscript, and the greater on the margins, and last the scholia or comments. Sometimes this work was performed by five different persons, sometimes by one,¹⁵ as appears from the subscriptions, which in a few cases have recently been added by dealers in manuscripts who wished to enhance their value by branding them with an antique trade-mark.

¹ "Vetus Testamentum Hebraicum cum Variis Lectionibus," Oxonii, 1776, 1780.

² "Variæ Lectiones Veteris Testamenti ex Immensa MSS. Editorumq. Codicum Congerie Hanstae" Opera ac Studio Johannis Bern. De Rossi, S. T. D., Parmæ, 1784, 1786. ³ Maimonides, "Sepher Tora," vii, 1.

⁴ Maimonides, "Tephillin," i, 13.

⁵ *Ibid*, i, 10.

⁶ Megillah, 16b; Gittin, 6b; Yebamoth, 106b.

⁷ Maimonides, "Tephillin," i, 5.

⁸ Maimonides, "Sepher Tora," vii, 4.

⁹ *Ibid*, 10.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 7.

¹¹ Sopherim v, 6.

¹² Alphas, 347b.

¹³ Maimonides, "Tephillin," vii, 12.

¹⁴ Burton & Drake, "Unexplored

Syria," Vol. I, p. 328.

¹⁵ Eichhorn, "Einführung in das Alte Testament," Goettingen, 1823, Vol. II, pp. 467-549.

[illegible][illegible][illegible][illegible]

A FACSIMILE OF TWO LEAVES OF CODEX CURTISIANUS I, A SPANISH MS. OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY, FROM
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The Tora rolls of the present day exhibit neither titles nor books, chapters nor verses. The whole Pentateuch is divided into fifty-four sections for reading in the synagogues on the Jewish sabbath. The five books and the various sections, larger and smaller, are simply indicated by an initial or important word at the beginning. The same custom is prevalent among the Assyrians. While the verses are pretty clearly marked by parallelism, their present arrangement is due to the Massoretes. The division of the Old Testament into chapters was adopted from the Latin Vulgate.¹ Nor was the designation of the other books of the Old Testament any more explicit. They follow, even in the Prophets, as indicated in the "*Codex Petropolitanus*," without any titles. The only heading which exists is simply that which is found in the first verse of each book, as "Vision of Isaiah, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem," etc. "*Codex Curtisianus*, I," furnishes an interesting example of the use of the margin of a manuscript for a treatise which has no bearing whatever on the elucidation of the text. Such a custom, as well as the use of margins for comments, arose from the scarcity of writing material. It is quite probable that in the age of the scribes, some of these comments, used in the explanation of the text, may have become embodied with it. We can say, however, that the preservation of the Old Testament text, especially in the time of the Talmudists and the Massoretes, is little less than miraculous, and even in the time of the scribes does not affect the essential character of Scripture.

There are two answers which we may return, with all confidence, to the question of the origin and transmission of the Old Testament text: (1) That God's word was given in the Old Testament, through man to man. Hence that word is both human and divine. But its divinity does not abate one jot from its humanity. Its divinity is seen in its progressive character, in its perfect adaptation to the men to whom it was first given, in its preparation for him who is the only Key to Law, Prophecy, and History, and in its adaptation to all times. These are more sure marks of divinity than perfect style, science, or history; for perfect style, science, and history might have made it an enigma to the men for whom it was first written. (2) These books have been transmitted in the original languages² with the utmost care, and yet we see that God's revelation does not depend upon the mere letter, any more than the human spirit is dependent upon the possession of the same particles and the same appearance in manhood as in youth.

God has not removed the possibility of unbelief regarding his Word. In every age there are those to whom Christ could say, as of old: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe."³ But to every honest student of the Word, these signs and wonders are not necessary for the confirmation of the record. The Bible itself, in what it is and does, is a greater wonder than the most marvelous confirmation which the hand of man can bring. These are not unimportant, but it is well to see that the Bible has a character which no amount of criticism, whether higher⁴ or lower,⁵ can shake. These things no more affect the settled deeps of God's truth than the tempest-tost waters disturb the depths of ocean. Critics may come and go, "But the Word of our God shall stand forever."⁶

¹ In the editions of the Hebrew Bible by Bomberg, Venice, 1521; Frobenius, Basel, 1536; and Robert Stephens, Paris, 1539-1544, there is no division into chapters.

² Besides the Hebrew Aramaic passages are Daniel ii, 4b, to vii, 28; Ezra iv, 8, to vi, 18, vii, 12-26.

³ John iv, 48.

⁴ Examination of the origin and literary character of the books.

⁵ Examination of the text.

⁶ Isaiah xl, 8.

Samuel Ines Curtis.

BOOK II.

FROM THE CREATION TO THE DAWN OF HUMAN HISTORY.

BY

FREDERIC W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S.

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Frederic W. Farrar.

BOOK II.

FROM THE CREATION TO THE DAWN OF HUMAN HISTORY.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL SURVEY.

THE task which I am bidden to undertake is to set forth the lessons, and explain the religious significance, of those opening chapters of the Book of Genesis, from the first to the eleventh, which cover the vast period—of unknown length—between the creation and the dawn of history. Those chapters contain all that holy men of old illumined by the light of the Holy Spirit, which in greater or less degree lighteth every man when he cometh into the world, were guided to preserve for us from the immemorial traditions of the Semitic race. The form which this revelation assumed, whether it be regarded as poetic or mythic, or as literally historical, is, in any case, of incomparably less moment than the idea which it enshrines. The view taken by learned seekers after truth of the date, origin, and character of the Biblical records has, in the last century, undergone an immense though silent revolution.

All Christians have held that the Bible is, in a general sense, and as a whole, and with reference to its final teachings, “inspired”; and that it contains the most perfect revelation of God which has ever been vouchsafed to humanity. But no dogmatic definition of inspiration, and no definition of it which demands implicit belief either in the genuineness and authenticity of all its books, or the absolute inerrancy of all its details, has ever been promulgated for the acceptance of the Christian Church. On the other hand, the flood of light which modern criticism has poured on the composition, origin, and meaning of the Scripture has not only left undisturbed every one of the great eternal verities of which Scripture is the chief vehicle, but has brought those verities home to us with incomparably greater force and vividness by disencumbering them from masses of crystalized superstition and traditional error. We no longer need to stare at Scripture as at some sphinx which devours those who cannot read her riddle, but we gaze at it as at some “human face divine”—human, indeed, and speaking with human lips, and marked by human limitations, but illuminated from within by an eternal knowledge, sympathy, and compassion.

It is no part of my task to write an introduction to the History of Modern Criticism. That has already been done in many volumes—English, American, French, Dutch, and especially German. These works have been based upon life-long, indefatigable and deeply conscientious researches. They set forth the conclusions which are now universally accepted by the foremost European scholars because they appeal with irresistible cogency to their reason and moral sense. But as my comment on these sacred records and traditions of primeval history will be silently modified throughout by the most recent results of critical inquiry, a few words on the subject are here indispensable.

As the result of the labors of indefatigable scholars and profound Hebraists, one broad and general result may now be regarded as absolutely proven: namely, that the Pentateuch as a

whole, together with the Book of Joshua, which properly belongs to it, is based on the combination of four independent, original, and in most instances easily distinguishable documents.

These four constituent documents of the Hexateuch are not only marked by the existence of minor repetitions and divergencies but each of them has its own moral and religious coloring, its own prominent conception, its own predominant aim, its own marked style and method, outline, and favorite expressions. They are thus separated from each other by material differences in the substance and object, and also by formal differences in style, in phraseology, in numbers, in facts, and in religious standpoint as well as the name by which they speak of God. And these differentiating marks are concomitant. They are not isolated nor do they occur in the narrative indiscriminately. They are numerous and reappear. It is even possible with approximate probability to conjecture the age in which each of the four documents was written, the region in which they first saw the light and the school of thought from which they respectively emanated. The induction which has led to their separation is based on many different lines of observation — especially the study of history, of worship, of the Hebrew language, and of Hebrew literature. The four main documents of the Hexateuch are as follows :

(1) P. There is one document which forms the predominant stratum in which all the others are imbedded and which is traceable throughout the Hexateuch. It is most commonly and conveniently designated by the letter P as forming a part of the Priestly Code. It is in its main purpose a book of laws. It is much later than E and J and it tells the story of Israel from the creation, from the standpoint of priestly enactments which many critics regard as post-exilic.

(2) E. A narrative by an Elohist writer, who all but invariably uses the name Elohim. It is predominantly a book of Judaic history, beginning with the patriarchs and extending through the Book of Joshua.

(3) J. A narrative by a writer who from the first uses the name Yahveh (Jehovah) and is therefore called the Yahvist. It is an outcome of the prophetic schools and breaks off with the blessing of Balaam.

(4) J E. The additions of an editor who appears to have combined the works of Elohist and the Yahvist (E and J) into one narrative before they were interwoven with P by one or more later editors. The separate traces of this Redactor are, however, less easily and less certainly distinguishable than those of the others and are, from the nature of his task, of subordinate importance. The result of his labors was that "there were two historical works in existence (P and J E) both running parallel from the creation to the settlement of Israel in Canaan." The history of worship alone involves four marked stages of progress. The Yahvistic (850 B. C.), the Deuteronomic (621 B. C.), the Ezekelian (573 B. C.), the Priestly (444 B. C.). These differ from each other as to the four particulars of time, place, mode, and persons of Jewish cult; and there is an observable difference, not only as to the facts but also as to the tone and spirit of the worship.

The main distinguishing characteristics of these four documents are as follows: (1) The Priestly writer (P). This document is especially important to us in the opening eleven chapters because it forms the greater part of them. It runs through the entire Hexateuch and essentially the law book of Israel. It was designed to set forth the ordinances, rights, customs, and usages which prevail among the chosen people as a congregation rather than as a kingdom. The history is only used as the basis of institutions, and as the explanation of their origin. Thus the opening chapters are intended as a sketch of the great phases of divine government, by which, even from the foundation of the world, the holy nation was elected by God to be "a people of his own possession," and was separated by marked epochs of advancing disseverment from the other tribes and nations of the world. It is with this view, and not solely for their own importance, that the writer narrates the creation, the deluge, the covenant with Noah, the

dispersion of mankind, the overthrow of haughty world-empires, the call of Abraham, the covenant with Abraham, and a covenant with Israel. One indication of this purpose in P is the tenfold recurrence of the phrase "these are the generations of," literally, "the begettings" or "genealogies." This phrase forms a sort of running headline, to mark off the stories of (1) The creation of heaven and earth (Genesis ii, 4, ff.). (2) The story of the descendants of Adam, through Seth to Noah (v, 1, ff.). (3) The story of Noah, and his sons (vi, 9, ff.). (4) The story of the sons of Noah, and the nations descended from them (x, 1, ff.). (5) The line of Shem down to Terah, the father of Abram (xi, 10, ff.). (6) The line and descendants of Terah to the death of Abram (xi, 27, ff.). (7) The line of Ishmael and the Arab tribes which sprang from him (xxv, 12, ff.). (8) The line of Isaac, and the story of his two sons till Isaac's death (xxv, 19, ff.). (9) The line of Esau, and his descendants (xxxvi, 9, ff.). (10) The line of Jacob, and the story of his descendants till the death of Joseph (xxxvii, 2, ff.).

Another characteristic of P is its annalistic style. The narratives are presented in a somewhat bare and dry form, with systematic statistics, genealogies, and chronological statements, which are in entire subservience to a puristic purpose. The writer dislikes all gross anthropomorphisms and omits stories of the patriarchs which offend his moral sense. He abounds in recurrent and somewhat technical expressions. His work is systematic in its structure and concrete in its delineations. It avoids poetic terms and pictures. We infer, especially from large parts of Leviticus which belong to it, that this narrative originated among the priesthood of Jerusalem, in all probability after the days of Ezekiel and in the epoch of the Exile. The writer is chiefly occupied with the theocracy rather than with humanity. His promises are limited to Israel and his interest is in Levitic ceremonialism rather than in the deep universal problem of theology and the passionate yearnings of the human heart. This document is marked in character and singularly homogeneous. The part of it contained in the first eleven chapters of Genesis is meant as a vestibule to the great temple which it desires to construct. It dwells on the creation, the deluge, and the covenant with Noah as preludes to the covenants with Abram, Jacob, Moses, and "As an introduction to the systematic view of the Theocratic Institutions which are to follow in Exodus to Numbers and which it is the main object of the author to exhibit."

2. THE ELOHIST (E). The document E is distinguishable by the use of the name Elohim for God till Exodus iii, together with the other characteristics which separate it decisively from P. I believe it to be largely based on oral tradition. It is generally agreed that the writer was a citizen of the Northern Kingdom. It abounds in special details about names, incidents, antiquities, sacred cities, and facts of local interest; and shows special regard for the dominance of Joseph and of the tribe of Ephraim. Unlike P it refers freely to the angels and dream revelations, and has none of the marked antipathy of the Priestly Code for local sanctuaries, nor even for matseboth and teraphim. This document is of less importance for these earlier chapters of Genesis, since it first makes its distinct and continuous appearance in chapter xx. Its narratives appear to be often mingled with those of J, and the ultimate analysis of these two documents is not always certain in details, though agreed upon in general outlines. E is more objective than P, less consciously tinged with ethical and theological reflection. In the matchless narrative of Joseph the writer shows his delight in didactic history.

3. THE YAHVIST (J). The third or Yahvistic document adopts from the first the name Yahveh, and may be described as distinctively the prophetic narrative. In Dillmann's opinion it emanated from Judah—a conclusion which he deduces from the exaltation of Judah¹ and from the interest displayed in the Negeb, or South country.² The Yahvist goes over many of the same facts as the author of P—the creation, the flood, the race of Noah, parts of the history of Abram, etc. His narrative is the most graphic and literary in form. Many of

¹Genesis xxxvii, 26, ff., xliii, 4, ff., etc.

²Genesis xxi, 33, xxxi, 23-25, etc.

his passages are "masterpieces of narration"; they are flowing, eloquent, tender, graceful, and marked by an infinite charm and pathos. He is also a deeper and more earnest psychologist than the other writers, as is shown by his account of the Origin of Sin, and "the method of God's compassion" in dealing with it, and obliterating its ominous effects on the world and man. At the same time he speaks of Jehovah with frank and anthropomorphic simplicity.¹ "His characteristic features," says Professor Driver, "may be said to be the fine vein of ethical and theological reflection which pervades his work throughout, and the manner in which his narrative, even more than that of E, becomes the vehicle of religious teaching." It is by no means easy to settle the relative ages of E and J. The latest writers think that the date of J is about 850 to 800 B. C.; and the date of E not later than 750 B. C.

4. THE REDACTOR (J E). The Redactor, whose work it was to unite the separate narratives of J and E, naturally occupies a place of subordinate importance. He was rather an editor than an independent author. It is agreed among critics that E is brief, terse, and archaic in his style. J is poetic and descriptive. His imagination and fancy are ever active. It is annalistic and diffuse. He denies its precision and completeness. The logical faculty prevails. In the first eleven chapters of Genesis it seems probable that the narratives must be divided as follows:

J.—Genesis ii, 4b-25.

iii, 1-24.

iv, 1-16, 25, 26.

v, 29 (or J E).

vi, 1-4, 5-8.

vii, 1-5 (and other separate verses,
e. g., 12, 16b, 17-22).

viii, 2b, 3a, 6-12, 13b, 20-22.

ix, 18a, 19-27.

x, 8-19, 21, 24-30.

xi, 1-9, 28b-30.

P.—Genesis i, 2-4a.

v, 1-28, 30-32.

vi, 9-22.

vii, 6, 11, 13-16a, 18-21, 24.

viii, 1, 2a, 3b-5, 13-19, 23b, 24.

ix, 1-17, 28, 29.

x, 1-7, 20, 22, 23, 31, 32.

xi, 10-27, 31, 32.

^a Refers to the first clause of the verse mentioned.

^b Refers to the second clause of the verse mentioned.

If it be asked in what way do these irrefragable critical conclusions affect our estimate of the Bible and modify our traditional views of the dogma of inspiration, the question deserves, on every ground, a serious answer.

1. As regards the Bible, those who love the Bible most—those who are most deeply profited by the divine teaching it contains—ought to be more jealously careful than any others that they do not blindly and willfully adopt for it a claim which it never makes for itself. The more deeply we reverence the Holy Scriptures the more earnestly ought we to shrink from injuring them by false assertions, and the more carefully should we examine them to find out what they are, instead of forming *a priori* hypotheses as to what we should expect them to be.

2. The question of inspiration is entirely vague. The word has never been defined by the Church, nor is it once explained in the Scripture. It is capable of multitudes of diverse senses; it must be used in very different connotations, according as it is applied to every separate phrase or section, or only to the Bible as a whole, and as finally represented by the ultimate perfection of its teaching in the life, the words, and the example of Christ. Two truths, however, about the Bible remain unshaken, and never can be shaken; and to them science and the higher criticism have set their seal as firmly as bibliolatry itself.

¹ Genesis ii, 15, ff., vi, 6, vii, 16, viii, 21.

a. One is that, "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."¹

b. The other is that, though the Bible is not one book but sixty-six books; though it is not a book but a literature, and as Edmund Burke said, "an infinite collection of the most varied and the most venerable literature"; though different parts of it are of very unequal value; though its morality and spiritual teaching are not from the first complete but show a gradual and progressive amelioration from the "Times of ignorance which God winked at" to the full light of the glorious Gospel; though even its distinctive teachings are not in all passages homogeneous; though the written Word is not our only method of knowing God; yet the Bible, as a whole, is one of the most sacred, one of the most inestimable, gifts of God to man, and without it mankind would have walked for ages in the darkness which might be felt.

3. A few of the very varied testimonies given to it by some of the greatest statesmen, thinkers, and scholars may serve to express its unsurpassable — nay, its absolutely unapproachable — value; and these testimonies, so far from having been impugned or weakened by the higher criticism, have only been set by it in a more beautiful and vivid light.

i. Speaking of the Bible, "Its light," said Cardinal Newman, "is like the body of heaven in its clearness; its vastness like the bosom of the sea; its variety like the scenes of nature."

ii. "The literature of Greece," said Theodore Parker, "which goes up like incense from that land of temples, has not half the influence of this book of a despised nation. The sun never sets upon its gleaming page."

iii. "What a book!" exclaimed Heinrich Heine, after a day spent in the unwonted task of reading it; "Vast and wide as the world, rooted in the abysses of creation, and towering up beyond the blue secrets of heaven, sunrise and sunset, promise and fulfillment, birth and death, the whole drama of humanity, all are in this book."

iv. "I have been seriously perplexed to know," says Professor Huxley, "how the religious feeling, which is the essential base of conduct, can be kept up without the use of the Bible. For three centuries this book has been woven into the life of all that is best and noblest in English history. It forbids the veriest hind, who never left his village, to be ignorant of the existence of other countries and other civilizations and of a great past stretching back to the farthest limit of the oldest nations of the world. By the study of what other book could children be so much humanized and made to feel that each figure in that vast historical procession fills, like themselves, but a momentary interspace between two eternities and causes the blessings or the curses of all time according to its efforts to do good and hate evil, even as they, also, are earning the payment for their work."

v. "In this little book," said Ewald to Dean Stanley as he stooped to pick up a New Testament, which had fallen from the table, "in this little book is contained all the best wisdom of the world."

vi. "*Après tout*," said Renan, "*le Bible est le grand livre consolation de l'Humanité*."

Here, then, are the opinions of a Romish Cardinal, of an American Unitarian, of a Jewish litterateur, of an English agnostic and man of science, of a German student, of a French critic; they are all at one, and hundreds of similar testimonies might be quoted from men of every clime, and age, and tongue.

4. Let it not, then, be said for a moment that the frank recognition of the human elements in the Bible in the slightest degree weakens — much less obliterates — our sense of the mercy which granted this boon to erring and suffering men; of the grace of superintendency which, amid all the accidents of more than 3,000 years, preserved its preciousness; of its necessity and

¹Sixth Article of the Church of England.

priceless value to the human race; of its infinite adaptability to all nations, all ages, all orders and degrees of men; of the truth that "every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work";¹ of the truth that in its pages "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"; of the truth that it contains the words and messages of God to the creatures whom he has made. "Its eclipse would be the return of chaos, its extinction the epitaph of history." "If we be ignorant," wrote King James' translators of 1611, "the Scriptures will instruct us; if out of the way, they will bring us home; if out of order, they will reform us; if in heaviness, comfort us; if dull, quicken us; if cold, inflame us. *Tolle, lege: tolle, lege.*"

5. And as regards the eleven chapters which it will now be our duty and pleasure to examine, while we cannot perceive that they are not, and were never meant to be, taken in all their details for accurate science or for literal history, we shall be able abundantly to recognize their unique grandeur, their transcendent majesty, and their supreme spiritual importance. There may be in them the elements of naturalistic myth, of idealizing moral fiction, of immemorial tradition, of historic legend, but, while the form in which they are cast does not permit us to regard them as supernaturally dictated, we shall see that they exhibit the very loftiest and purest degree of inspiration in the sublime and eternal verities which they enshrine as an indefeasible possession for the entire race of man till time shall be no more.

6. We shall see that they are absolutely unique. Nothing comparable to their wealth of divine instructiveness could be gathered from all the vast agglomeration of the literature of the world, including all its sacred books. They are unique in scope, for in these chapters alone does the Bible deal with the general history of mankind before the flood; unique in concentration, for they cover 2,000 of the 4,000 years of traditional chronology between the creation and the coming of Christ; unique in the grandeur of their themes, since, among others, "they deal with the origin of life, the origin of sin, the beginnings of civilization, the dispersion of nations, and the confusion of tongues; unique in choice of selection, since the writers have only dealt with eight or nine events in 2,000 years; unique, also, in bringing us more directly than any other part of Scripture face to face with what has been idly called 'the conflict of the Bible with science'; but as it should far more accurately be stated, the true relations between the letter of parts of the Bible and that immense and glorious revelation which God has vouchsafed to human inquiry and human toil, in the certain results of astronomy, geology, ethnology, philology, and the various branches of physiological and biological science."

7. And they are not only unique but unquestionably and unapproachably supreme. There are many parallels to them, of a striking and deeply interesting character; parallels which sometimes extend even to minute particulars—in the Sacred Books and primitive traditions of the Semitic, the Aryan, and the Allophylian races; but not the most poetic, the most recondite, or the most philosophical of these—not even those which we find in the Vedas of the thoughtful Hindoos, of which the Hesiodic and Homeric poems, or the philosophemes of the brilliant Greeks, or in the immemorial lore of Egyptian hierarchies, or in the striking myths of Babylon and Assyria, do we find any single document which could for one moment be compared in purity, in majesty, in simplicity, in the unadorned and awe-inspiring sublimity and spiritual conception, with the drama of the creation of the world, and man, set forth in the first two chapters of Genesis. It does not lose itself in the monstrous polytheism and endless complications of other cosmogonies, but sets forth with all the authority of a sacred oracle those truths which are at once the most elementary and the most essential; the truths on which the wisest and the noblest of nations have molded their religious obligations and their fundamental theology. The investigations of Mr. George Smith and the discovery by him of Assyrian

¹ II. Timothy iii. 16-17 (Revised Version).

tablets on the site of the palace of Assur-bani-pal at Kuyunjik, have restored to us the Chaldean story of the deluge. A glance suffices to show us that the manifold resemblances to the Scripture narrative, even in details and expressions, cannot possibly be fortuitous, although the Chaldean legend is perhaps older than the Jewish by hundreds of years; but it shows us at the same time that the superiority of the account of this catastrophe in Genesis is in all respects immense.

In examining the records of such surpassing interest and value, our aim will be to disentangle them from the false conceptions of Jewish Rabbism and Christian Scholasticism, and to set them forth in their divine perfection as the clearest, earliest, and most sacred teaching of eternal truths.

And our method will be first to examine each chapter as it stands on the sacred page, and to illustrate it to the best of our ability in the limited space at our disposal by such truths as have been furnished to us by the accumulated knowledge and progress of the world. We may here note that Genesis is divided by the Jews into twelve sections (*parashayoth*), of which the first section is Genesis i, 1, to vi, 8, which is called *Bereshith*, the beginning; the second (vi, 9, to xi, 32) is called *Noah*; the third (xii, 1, to xvii, 27) is called “Get thee out” (*Lek-l’ka*); the fourth (xviii, 1) “And he appeared,” and so on.

CHAPTER II.

(GENESIS I-II.)

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD AND MAN.

P.

(GENESIS I, 1.)

“IN the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” The words “in (the) beginning” take us back to the dawn of all time, and of all existence. The writer knew as little as we know, as little as any men have ever known, of those inexpressible secrets which it is impossible for the mind of man to grasp. The ultimate origin and nature of things, the beginning of all beginnings in the Being of God, is concealed from human ken by an impenetrable veil. “Canst thou by searching find out God?” asks Zophar; “Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than Sheol; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.”¹ Of molecules and protoplasm, of physical theories of the universe, of the origin of species, of the struggle for existence, of natural selection, of the laws which determined the formation of the stellar universe, of the impossibility of understanding anything in itself since all knowledge is nothing but a modification of an incognizable Ego by an incognizable non-Ego, of the countless discoveries and theories of modern science, the Hebrews knew little or nothing; and, even after they came into contact with Greek and other civilizations, few of them showed the smallest interest in such questions. Their speculative genius occupied itself with entirely different problems. Their appointed function among the races of mankind was to be the upholders to the nations of the banner of righteousness, and the revealer of the Unity, the Power, and the Love of God.² And their tendency was as little metaphysical as it was scientific. As they had no one word for the Universe, so they had no one word for eternity;

¹ Job xi, 7-9.

² This is constantly insisted on in Scripture. See Exodus xiii, 9; Deuteronomy xxxiii, 2; Psalm lxxviii, 5; Isaiah i, 10; Hosea iv, 6, viii, 12, etc.

and perhaps but few of them had faced or grasped eternity as an abstract and indefinable conception.¹ Such a phrase as "ages of ages" ordinarily sufficed them. The Hebrew chronology treated constructively makes the age of the existing order of the world and man only extend backward to the petty limit of 6,000 years; but there is nothing to prove that the writer did not mentally date back the primordial movements of creation to untold ages of the past. In that case, the phrase "in the beginning" would be as absolute as it is in the mighty opening of the prologue of the Gospel of Saint John, where "in beginning" (without the article) not only takes us back to "the initial moments of time and creation,"² but to a time where Time itself was not, seeing that time is but a mode of thought necessitated by human limitations, and it is only our weakness which "sometimes shapes the shadow time"; whereas to the Almighty One it does not appear as "a phantom of succession" but "is and was and will be" are but is.

In dealing with Holy Writ, the deepest spirit of reverence, no less than the sacred demands of truth, compels us to sweep away the manifold glosses of later interpreters, whereby they endeavor with artificial manipulations to force out of the language of Scripture the conceptions which, in accordance with a preconceived theology, they think that it ought to contain.

i. Thus we reject the gloss of the Jerusalem Targum in which the writers, imbued with the conception of the *chokmah* or Sapiential literature, represented "in the beginning" by the words "with wisdom," that is, "by his Word, the Logos." The conception is perfectly true that "He hath established the world by his wisdom,"³ and Proverbs viii, 22-31, is a development of this thought. There Wisdom cries: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. . . . When there were no depths, . . . before the hills was I brought forth, while as yet he had not made the earth. . . . When he prepared the heavens; . . . when he gave to the sea his decree, . . . when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, . . . and I was daily his delight." But to find that truth in this phrase is to sanction that system of exorbitant inferences, the "ever-widening spiral ergo from the narrow apertures of single texts" which has been the curse of all sane and honest exegesis.⁴

ii. The Jews did not stand alone in applying this false method. We know that it was Christ, the Logos, the Divine Word "by whom also all things were made." "He was in the world" said Saint John, "and the world was made by him."⁵ Following a false method, some of the Fathers—for instance Clement of Alexandria and Saint Augustine⁶—tried to read that truth into this opening word of Genesis. But it is one thing to say that all the details of a truth are implicitly contained in the broadest utterance of a truth, and it is quite another to assert that all those details of subsequent revelation were present to the mind of the priestly writer who penned this chapter. Luther saw how untenable was this casuistry, and Calvin, with the robust and honest common sense which distinguished him in all cases where his immediate prejudices were not involved, says "it is too frivolous to interpret the word 'beginning' as meaning Christ."

iii. With the preposterous fancies of the Jewish Kabbala we shall not concern ourselves, but we may here give one specimen of it. Because by anagram *Bereshîth* becomes *Bethisrî*, they said that the world was created in September (*Tisri*),⁷ and the law, they said, begins with "B," because it is the first letter of *Berakah*—blessing.

¹ Their phrases were "To ages of ages," "forever and beyond," "unto all generations," etc.

² Compare Isaiah xl, 21. ³ Jeremiah x, 12.

⁴ The Doctrine of a personal Logos is first prominent in Philo. The nearest approach to it in pre-Christian literature is in the Wisdom of Solomon (ix, 1, xvi, 12, xviii, 14-15).

⁵ John i, 10 (compare Psalm xxxiii, 6); Hebrews i, 2, xi, 3; Ephesians iii, 9; Colossians i, 16; Revelation iv, 11.

⁶ Augustine, "Confessions," XI, viii, § 9.

⁷ For other specimens see my Bampton Lectures on "The History of Interpretation," pp. 34-37.

2. "In the beginning God created."—The word here used for God, as all but invariably by the Priestly writer (P), is Elohim. The word suggests important inquiries.¹

i. It is a plural word and many Christian writers have believed that the plural indicates the mystery of the Trinity. Since "it is usually construed with the singular, both of the adjective and of the verb, except when it signifies the idols of the heathen." But the same remark applies to this view as to the fanciful and arbitrary interpretations of the word "Beginning"; great Christian writers so much opposed to each other as Calvin and Cardinal Bellarmine have rightly rejected this suggestion of Peter Lombard, the Master of Sentences.² To Christians, of course, the idea lies in the word, but there is no trace that it did so to the ancient Israelites.

ii. Nor, again, is it a correct view that the plural name of the one God is a survival of polytheism; on the contrary, as Rabbi Jehudah Halevi says, in his "C'ozri" (twelfth century), the word Elohim is rather a protest against the idolatry which gave the name Eloah to each personified power. He rightly says that Elohim represents God as the God of nature, with reference to his manifested power; whereas Yahveh refers to his personality, his relations to man as the God of Grace, and, above all, the covenant relation in which he stood to his people, Israel. Sack interprets Elohim as meaning "a certain infinite, omnipotent, incomprehensible existence, from which things finite and visible have derived their origin."³ Naturally, then, "Elohim" was the general name of the deity, and was mainly used in speaking of him to the heathen, whereas Yahveh was his covenant name to Israel in particular.

iii. Nor, again, does the name Elohim imply the conception of God as mingled up with that of the heavenly host. Angelology assumed no distinct and definite prominence in the minds of the Israelites till the days of the Exile and their familiarity with the religion of the Persians.

iv. There seems to be little doubt that the Rabbis were right in interpreting the word "Elohim" as a simple "plural of majesty," known grammatically as the "*pluralis excellentiæ*." The word connotes God in all his preëminence of infinitude and universality; first, as in Proverbs ix, 1, the plural *chokmoth* is used for the singular *chokmah*, to express wisdom in the abstract "as including all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"; in the same way, the plural "Adonim" is used for Lord in Isaiah xix, 4; and "Baalim"⁴ in Exodus xxi, 29; and *Qedoshim* for the Holy One in Hosea xi, 12.⁵

v. The tablets found at Tel el-Amarna, in Upper Egypt, show that in Babylonia also "God" was used for one supreme Deity. The usage became part of "that language of Canaan" (Isaiah xix, 18) which the Hebrews adopted, and it must consequently have gone back to the earliest days of their history.⁶

3. "In the beginning God created." The word for created is the Hebrew *Bārā*, a word almost exclusively set apart for the work, and especially the free creative work of God, whether physieal or spiritual. (Psalm li, 12.)⁷ Nothing is here distinctly said about "creation out of nothing"; but it is implied throughout. It is first distinctly formulated in II. Maccabees vii, 28: "God made them of things that were not; and so was mankind made likewise." In Hebrews xi, 3, we read the much more moderate expression "that what is seen hath not been made out of things that do appear." Contact with Greek philosophy had made the Jews shy

¹ I do not enter into the etymology of the word, because it still remains highly uncertain.

² The Fathers, in the infancy of criticism, were misled by ignorance of facts. Tertullian rightly observes that the name Jehovah rendered in the LXX, *κύριος*, "Lord," does not occur till after the account of the creation, but is unaware that the reading *κύριος*, which represents the form Adonai, of which the vowels were superstitiously substituted for those of the ineffable Tetragrammaton, Yahveh. Chrysostom went altogether astray in supposing that Elohim and Yahveh were equivalents arbitrarily interchanged.

³ Sack, *De usu nom. Dei*.

⁴ Owner. ⁵ In the Hebrew, Hosea xii, 1: "Faithful toward the All-holy One" (*Qedoshim*).

⁶ Sayce, "The Higher Criticism and the Monuments," p. 86.

⁷ Exodus xxxiv, 10; Isaiah lxv, 17; Psalm cxlviii, 5; Jeremiah, xxxi, 22.

of speculating on that which lies beyond all human apprehension. The writer of Wisdom, therefore, says that God's almighty hand made the world out of formless matter as in Plato, *Timæus*, § 30. But no preëxistent matter is here ever alluded to; and we must say with the Psalmist (xxxiii, 6): "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth"; for as Philo says: "With God to speak is to do."¹

4. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

i. The particle "eth" before "heavens" and "earth" is merely the sign of the accusative. Nothing but the idlest perversion of fancy could dwell on the fact that its two component letters, aleph and taw, are the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet; or see in it any cabalistic mystery referring to the ultimate essence—as it were the Alpha and the Omega of heaven and earth.

ii. The Hebrews used "*heavens and earth*" to express the word "Universe," for which they had no one word, any more than the Greeks had till Pythagoras gave them the fine word "*Kosmos*," or "Order." Jeremiah used the phrase "the All" to express the same idea—"He is the former of the All" (Jeremiah x, 16).

iii. The School of Shammai maintained that the heavens were created first and then the earth; but, since in Genesis ii, 4, we have "Yahveh Elohim created the earth and the heavens," the School of Hillel declared that the earth was created first. The Mishnaic Rabbis declared that they were created at the same time; for in Isaiah xlviii, 19 (Authorized Version), we read, "My hand hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spread out the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together."²

I. In this simple majestic verse is summed up the inmost and the fullest significance of the entire story of the creation. If "every good gift and every perfect boon is from above, coming down from the Father of the Light, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning";³ if man can attain to no truth save by that Holy Spirit, who is the light that "lighteth every man as he cometh into the world";⁴ then this voice expresses in the highest degree the result of a divine revelation to the Jewish race.

For in five grand authoritative words it corrects and sets aside the errors of millions of mankind during millenniums of the world's history. And this was its object: not the inculcation of scientific facts which were undreamed of till many centuries after it was uttered. The discovery of those facts was also a revelation; the progress of science was the appointed way in which God made known much more than man could otherwise have ascertained of the means by which this Almighty power and wisdom had set in motion and controlled all material forces, thereby bringing order out of confusion and light out of darkness. The results of science were both a revelation of true knowledge and a source of stupendous power. They were granted to man in reward for the reverent use of his heaven-implanted faculties of reason and observation, applied to the study of God's work. The revelation vouchsafed to us in Holy Scripture belongs to a wholly different order. The opening section of Genesis neither was, nor was intended to be, a chapter of physiography. Indeed, its details, regarded as facts and not as a philosopheme, are in some instances irreconcilable with science, or only reconcilable with it by the adoption of hypotheses so violent as to shock our sense of honest interpretation. But these details are but an accident, an expansion, an ornamental environment of the one essential revelation. Given the central fact, which was of infinite importance, that the Universe was the work of one All-wise and All-powerful Intelligence, it was natural that this inspired and inspiring truth should be expanded in accordance with immemorial human tradition, in such a way as seemed most in unison with observed phenomena, or with the inferences which they might naturally suggest. Writing of prehistoric ages in prescientific days, nothing was farther from

¹ Philo, "The Sacrifice of Abel," § 18. See Bishop Westcott's note on Hebrews xi, 3.

² *Tamid* 31b.

³ James i, 17 (Revised Version).

⁴ John i, 9 (Revised Version, margin).

the wildest dreams of the sacred writer than an exposition of the rudiments of astronomy, geology, or general physics. "The Scriptures," as Archbishop Sumner said, "have never revealed a single scientific truth." Nay, the abuse of their isolated expressions to distort them into a false and purely semblable agreement with the long results of time, is a method which was only resorted to after they had been, for ages, warped in an opposite direction from their true purpose. Scripture had been mishandled by the ignorance of priests, to oppose each science as it dawned; to retard the progress of mankind, to persecute and torment its best benefactors, and to disparage each new discovery of heaven-illuminated genius. The Scriptures have nothing to do with science. They belong to a different and a higher sphere. Intense as is the intrinsic interest of science, and vast as is the importance of its achievements for the material comfort of man, its importance is absolutely subordinate to the more inward revelation of himself which God vouchsafes to the spirit of man. In this sense it remains true that science can but be the handmaid or the sister of theology, and can but illustrate and reinforce the data which man derives from his unimpeded access to God through the inbreathing of Christ's Holy Spirit.

II. Consider, then, in this light the infinite and far-reaching importance of these five opening words of the Book of Genesis.

The vast majority—all, indeed, but an insignificant fraction of mankind, of all races, in all ages, in every phase of civilization or of savagery, from the refined and brilliant Greeks to the wild North American Indians—have fallen in many forms into fundamental errors which these few words firmly and finally correct.

i. The vast majority of mankind have been polytheists; they have worshiped "gods many and lords many."¹ They have deified the heavenly bodies; or the forces and operations of nature; or their own worst passions; or birds and beasts and creeping things. Against countless millions and all generations of polytheists in the past and in the present this verse reveals and declares that there is *One God*, not many gods.

ii. Some races of mankind like the Persians, and some religious bodies like the Manichees, have believed that there are two gods—Ormuzd and Ahriman—one good and one evil. This verse declares that there is *One God* who is All good and All holy, and that there is none beside him.

iii. Some isolated thinkers, and those whose natural and instinctive impressions they have disturbed, have been atheists; they have declared that there is no God. This verse affirms that there is a God and *One God*.

iv. Many have imagined and taught that God is nothing but the *anima mundi*, or soul of the universe; and that, apart from it, he has no separate existence. They have given a literal and exclusive meaning to the view described by our own poet, that

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the Soul;
That, changed through all, and yet in all the same;
Great in the earth, as in the ethereal frame;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars and blossoms in the trees;
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent."

These lines are perfectly true in the sense that "God is in all things." A false sense is given to them when it is believed that "God is all things." That is Pantheism. This verse teaches that God exists apart from and was anterior to all his works.

v. Many have believed that there is indeed a God, but that there is no Divine Providence;

¹ I. Corinthians viii, 5. The Hindoo and other mythologies involve a belief in thousands of gods.

that the Supreme Being is careless of, indifferent to, the creatures whom he has made. This verse implies and the whole subsequent revelation affirms that he is a Father to all creatures whom he has created, that his tender mercies are over all his works, and that all his works are very good.

vi. Many have assumed that, though there is one God, yet matter is eternal and preëxistent; that nothing could be made out of nothing; that matter, therefore, coexisted with God from the beginning; that matter is inherently evil; and that the existence of all evil in the world arises from the fact that matter existed apart from and independently of God. The sacred writer, without in any way entering into the question of matter, declares that God “*created*” the heavens and the earth — *i. e.*, the Universe, “the All.”

vii. Many have believed that, though God *is*, we cannot know anything respecting him. That is agnosticism. This verse implies, and all the subsequent revelation affirms, that “the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead”; that “the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork”; that he hath “left not himself without witness”; that “in him we live, and move, and have our being”; that “we may know him”; and that to know him is “life eternal.”

viii. Almost every error, then, of mankind, in general — every fundamental religious aberration, whether of philosopher or of savages — on the subject of the Supreme Being is corrected in these few words: Polytheism, Totemism, Sun-worship, Ditheism, Atheism, Pantheism; the denial of Divine Providence; the belief in the preëxistence and inherent evil of matter; the denial of our ability to know anything of God. To correct those errors was the object of the Revelation, and at the same time to set forth as an unquestionable eternal verity that “there is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker and Preserver of all things, both visible and invisible.”¹

VERSE 2. “And the earth was without form (or waste) and void.”

1. i. This is a description of the original chaos, the “matter without form,” as it is called in Wisdom xi, 17, out of which God educes his kosmos. Up to some indeterminate moment in the ages of the eternal silence, there had existed only the vast abyss of substance in which all form was formless, order orderless; the “material beginning”² or the “material essence”³ of Aristotle; colorless, shapeless, indistinguishable, without accidents, infinitely plastic.

ii. It is a mistaken exegesis, contradicted by the whole of Scripture, that this verse must be taken as a statement separate from the first; and that this waste void was the already existent *material* out of which God made the world. It is clearly meant to be part of the “heaven and earth” which the previous verse has told us that God “created.” The sacred writer is not guilty of the error of Philo, who must have believed in the eternity of matter, since he emphatically repeats the aphorism of Aristotle, “from nothing nothing comes,” and says that there are four causes of creation: the agent, God; the instrument, the Word; the *material cause*; the *final cause*, or end, God’s goodness.

2. “Without form and void.” These words in the original are very interesting because they form a sort of descriptive paronomasia or assonance — *tohoo va bohoo*. Such assonances, so far from being immature or childish, belong, in their due place, to the inmost mystery of language, and add no little to the force and fascination of words. They are in consequence found in very solemn and beautiful passages of Scripture.⁴ Any attempt to distinguish

¹ Article I of the Church of England. ² ἡλικὸς ἀρχή.

³ ἡλικὴ οὐσία, Metaphysic iv, 7, §1; Ueberweg, “History of Philosophy,” i, 123.

⁴ Job xxx, 19; Isaiah liv, 8, xxviii, 10, 13; Psalm xviii, 8; Nahum ii, 11; Zephaniah i, 15, etc., and see my chapter on Language, “Language and Languages,” p. 232.

accurately between the two words seems impossible, though Rabbi Nachmanides refers *tohoo* to "matter" and *bohoo* to "form."

iii. This conception of the primitive chaos is common to all cosmogonies.

3. "And darkness was upon the face of the deep."

The question whether darkness (the inseparable concomitant of chaos in all cosmogonies) was a separately existing entity and merely the absence of light was not probably one which at all presented itself to the mind of the writer.

The word for "deep" is *tehom* (Psalm xlii, 7) from the onomatopoeic root "*hoom*," "to bubble" or "boil." It presents an interesting analogy to the *Tiamat* of the Assyro-Babylonian myth of creation, in which the chaos is reduced by Merodach to order and beauty.¹

4. "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the water."

i. By "the Spirit of God" (*Ruach Elohim*) some have understood nothing more than "a wind sent from God"² which dried part of the waters. This does not accord with the context, which implies the action of God's Spirit, or Breath. (Compare Psalm xxxiii, 6—"By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." Also Psalm civ, 30.)

ii. "Moved" is rendered by the LXX. *ἐπεφύετο*; but the truer sense is given in the margin of our Revised Version, "*was brooding upon*," as in Deuteronomy xxxii, 11, of the eagle gently hovering over her nest and young. The sense of the verb is exactly expressed in Milton's

"Dovelike sat'st brooding o'er the vast abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant."

5. "Upon the face of the water."

Here again it is needless to raise questions which either were not present to the mind of the writer, or, if they were, remained unsolved. We cannot tell whether he regarded the primordial chaos as being itself a watery mass, or whether, as in Psalm civ, 6, he thought of the earth as a solid mass lying beneath it. The question is not decided by verse 9. He may in some sense have shared the cosmogonic conception of Thales, found also among the Chinese, Egyptians, Mexicans, and others, that water was the primary element.

WORK OF THE FIRST DAY.

VERSE 3. "And God said 'Light be' and 'Light was.'"

i. In the original there is an indescribable grandeur in these four words. They are so remarkable as even to have excited the admiration of a pagan like Longinus, who, in his treatise on "*the Sublime*," quotes them as an instance of majestic speech. The best comment on their grandeur is that exquisite passage in Haydn's "Creation," in which the thrilling, pulsating, swelling waves of delicious sound end as in the bursting of one splendid billow of music, in the crash on the one word "Light."

ii. "God said." "Of course," as Luther observed long ago, "by '*said*' is not intended a voice in the air." God's words represent his essential and self-effecting will. "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm xxxiii, 9, clxviii, 5).

iii. Light is here conceived of as something apart from the celestial bodies. Thus, too, it is thought of in the Book of Job, chapter xxxviii, 19-21:

"Where is the way to the dwelling of light,
And as for darkness, where is the place thereof?
That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof,
And that thou shouldest discern the paths to the house thereof?"³

¹ Sayce, "Chaldean Genesis," pp. 59, 109, 113.

² So most of the Rabbis; Abn Ezra, Rashbam, etc., and the Targum of Onkelos, and Philo.

³ Compare Job xxvi, 10.

The same conception recurs in many cosmogonies. The throne of Ormuzd is from the beginning a throne of light, and Indra the god of light is the firstborn of gods in the Hindoo mythology.

VERSES 4 AND 5. 1. The glorious refrain which expresses God's approval "*that it was good*" is repeated seven times in this chapter.

i. The sacred artificiality of numbers is observable from the first. Three and Seven, the two numbers which dominate this chapter, are throughout Scripture, mysterious and symbolic numbers. *Three* expresses the concrete and perfect unity, especially of the Deity; *Seven* implies holiness and religious sanctification.

ii. There is a divine and encouraging optimism of the loftiest character in this sevenfold blessing on the six days' work. The division between the light and the darkness, and the names of Day and Night, given them by God, show that even the darkness is still as Homer calls it—"welcome, thrice-prayed for."¹ The light-worshiping Persians also regarded darkness as having its own sacred and beneficent necessity.

iii. When we are told that God called the light "*Day*," and the darkness "*Night*," it would be a silly literalism to take that clause to imply that God revealed the two Hebrew words *yom* (day) and *laylah* (night); or to infer from all incidental explanations, added for the sake of clearness, the supernatural inspiration of full-blown language. The origin of language is not here touched upon at all, and can only be ascertained as the facts of the material universe are ascertained—by patient observation and induction.

2. "And there was evening and there was morning, one day."²

i. The "one day" meant undoubtedly one *civil* day, not millions of years as harmonists idly and arbitrarily suggest. One object of the narration is to indicate the institution of the sabbath in accordance with the unvarying tendency of the priestly narrator to describe the origin of sacred ordinances. This object would be rendered meaningless if Day and Night were taken to mean anything we choose. Day can only mean what it means throughout the chapter and throughout the book. That the day of twenty-four hours could not have been marked by sunrise and sunset before the sun was created is not a question which crossed the mind of the writer. He knew nothing of the earth's revolution on its axis, and he is moving in a sphere of the purely spiritual conceptions, with which alone he felt the smallest concern. The attitude of pragmatic literalism and prosaic lack of all imagination is the most entirely fatal to any right apprehension of this "Epic of Creation" in its ideal grandeur.

ii. "Evening" is mentioned first in agreement with a natural and therefore universal conception that darkness must have preceded light. It is for this reason that the Greeks called a full day "a night and a day,"³ and we describe a week or two weeks as sennight or fortnight. An old border oath was: "By God who made the world in six days and seven nights." We find the same mode of reckoning among Athenians, Arabs, Moslems, Gauls, and Germans.

SECOND DAY.

(VERSES 6 TO 8.)

1. God next created an expanse "in the midst of the waters," to divide the waters which were under the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse. He called the expanse "heaven"; and evening was and morning was—a second day.

i. The sky is here—ideally or actually—regarded and spoken of as a solid substance. The Hebrew word *rāqîa* (expanse) is derived from a root which means to "beat out,"⁴ and the word implies in the strictest sense, a *firmanent*. The notion of the heavens as a crystalline

¹ ἀσπασίη, τρίλιςτος, "Iliad," viii, 488.

² Not "the first day" as in King James Version.

³ II. Corinthians xi, 25.

⁴ See Exodus xxxix, 3.

sky, in which the stars were fixed as golden nails, was held by some of the old Greek philosophers; and the Greek poets speak of heaven as "iron" or "brazen." This firmament supports the upper clouds and reservoirs of rain, and divides them from the rivers and seas. It has, in poetic descriptions, doors and windows, and is supported by pillars.¹ The writer may have had the more scientific conceptions which we find in other parts of Scripture,² but they had no bearing on his present idea.

iii. It has been noticed from the earliest times that after this day alone is omitted the blessing "And God saw that it was good." This is, indeed, added in the Septuagint after the sixth verse. Abn Ezra accounts for the omission by supposing that the work of the second day is only really *completed* on the third day. Some Talmudists suppose that the approving word was withheld because Gehenna was created on the second day.³ In any case an eightfold repetition of the formula would have interfered with the concinnity of sacred numbers which prevails throughout the chapter.

THIRD DAY.

(VERSES 11 TO 13.)

The creative work of the third day consists in the separation of the sea from the dry land and the clothing of the earth with vegetation — herbs, grass, and all seed-bearing plants; trees and all arboraceous shrubs which have their seeds in their fruit. Three kinds of vegetation are mentioned: "greenness" or green grass (*deshe*), which was believed to grow spontaneously; vegetables and grain (*eseb*); and, collectively, all trees and fruit-bearing plants (*etz*). With this account we may compare the poetic description in Psalm civ, 5-16:

He laid the foundations of the earth,
That it should not be moved forever;
Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a vesture;
The waters stood above the mountains.
At thy rebuke they fled;
At the voice of thy thunder they hasten away;
They went up by the mountains, they went down by the valleys,⁴
Unto the place which thou hadst founded for them.

He watereth the mountains from his chambers:
The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.
He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle,
And herb for the service of man.

The trees of the Lord are satisfied;
The cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted.

FOURTH DAY.

(VERSES 14 TO 19.)

On the fourth day are created the celestial orbs which divide the day from the night and serve to mark the distinction of seasons, and days, and years,⁵ as well as to shed light on earth from the firmament of heaven. The two great lights, sun and moon, are specially placed in

¹ Genesis vii, 11; Ezekiel i, 1-22; Job ix, 6, xxvi, 11, xxxvii, 18; II. Samuel xxii, 8; Psalms lxxviii, 23, civ, 3, cxlviii, 4; II. Kings vii, 2.

² Genesis ii, 6; Job xxvi, 7, xxxvi, 27; Jeremiah x, 13. Psalm cxxxv, 7.

³ See P'sachim, 54a. "But," it adds, "that the work of the second day was also good is implied in the word 'everything' in verse 31." To this day, for this reason, Monday is regarded as an unlucky day by orthodox Jews.

⁴ On margin, "The mountains rose, the valleys sank down."

⁵ Perhaps the expression "for signs" may refer to the universal ancient belief that the movements of the heavenly bodies portended changes of time and states.

heaven to rule the day and night. Two sublime words — “And the stars” — suffice to describe in the original the stupendous creation of the whole stellar universe.

The *M'oroth* are “orbs” of light. The Septuagint renders the word by “lamps,” the Vulgate by *luminaria*. The verses, short, unadorned, and simple as they are, constitute the firm protest of the chosen people against the worship of the sun, which was so predominant among the Persians; against the cult of the great Moon-god of the Babylonians; against the worship of the “Host of Heaven”; which has been so characteristic of many forms of polytheism. That the heavenly bodies have far wider and larger purposes than to give light to this fractional atom of a planet, which, for instance, only receives 1-230,000,000th part of the sun's light, was, of course, unknown to the writer, and practically unrevealed to the human race till the days of Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, and Laplace. Neither the Priestly writer nor any of his nation, during long millenniums, had the faintest conception of the unfathomable abysses of the aerial ocean, with its uncounted galaxies. Neither was such knowledge, intense as is its interest, and infinitely as it expands the narrow limits of our imagination, in any way essential to the salvation of the human race, or its deliverance from the idolatry of the creature to the worship of the Creator.

The system of the Hebraic cosmogonist is, of course, geocentric, and to him all the stars are like cressets hung in the sky.¹ But what is of essential and eternal significance is that to him the Sun in all its indescribable splendor, “going forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoicing as a giant to run his course,” though

“His going forth is from the end of the heaven,
And his circuit unto the ends of it:
And there is nothing hid from the heat thereof,”²

is still nothing but a created thing — a creature of the Being who has set his glory above the heavens. The Hebrew can admire and glory in the work of God's hands, and climb by these sunbeams to “the Father of the lights.”³ He can join — even with his imperfect and limited knowledge of the scientific facts which are now the heritage of every child — in impassioned bursts of poetry on the glory of creation; but the burden of them all is the goodness of the Almighty Creator, which inspires the inerrant refrain:

“O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good:
For his mercy endureth forever.

To him that made great lights:
For his mercy endureth forever:
The sun to rule by day:
For his mercy endureth forever:
The moon and the stars to rule by night:
For his mercy endureth forever.”⁴

The glory of the Hebrew is that he is never a materialist; other nations — Babylonians, Assyrians, Egyptians, Persians — “worshiped and adored the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forevermore.” But to the chosen people God has revealed himself as the Creator of the Universe. To the Jew it was always Yahveh himself, who “covered himself with light as with a garment, and spread out the heavens like a curtain”; he could appeal to God and say

“If I beheld the sun where it shined,
Or the moon walking in brightness;

¹ It need hardly be said that nothing could possibly be farther from the mind of the sacred writer than the nebular hypothesis of Laplace.

² Psalm xix, 5, 6.

³ James i, 17.

⁴ Psalm cxxxvi, 1-9.

And my heart hath been secretly enticed,
 And my mouth hath kissed my hand:
 This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judges:
 For I should have lied to God that is above."¹

FIFTH DAY.

(VERSES 20 TO 23.)

On this day took place the creation of the fishes and the birds. The waters were bidden to swarm with swarms of living creatures, and the air with flying fowls. The great monsters and the fishes of the deep are called into being, and winged fowl, and God blessed them and bade them be fruitful and multiply.

i. In speaking of the fish the conception of their teeming multitude is given in the word *sharats*, inadequately rendered by the LXX. "bring forth,"² and the Vulgate's "produce."³ It is rather as in the margin of our Revised Version: "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures."

ii. In the *tannînîm*, "great monsters," some see an intended distinction between the mammiferous cetacea, which, like the whale, suckle their young, and other fishes. This is unlikely, because we find no trace of it anywhere else in the Bible; and *tannîn* is simply derived from the root "*tānan*" to stretch, including creatures like the serpent and the crocodile.

iii. It is not implied that the "birds of wing" were produced out of the waters, though this was the rendering of the Targums, of Luther, of the LXX., the Vulgate, and even of our King James Version. There is no certain reference to the belief that birds and fishes are closely akin. The translation is not "Let the waters teem with the moving creature . . . and fowl" (King James), but rather, as in the Revised Version, "Let the waters bring forth . . .; and let *fowl fly* above the earth."

iv. The paronomasia of the blessing "Be fruitful and multiply" (*peroo ru'-reboo*), is again repeated to the human pair in verse 28 and in chapter ix, 1.

SIXTH DAY.

(VERSES 24 TO 31.)

These verses describe the crowning work of God in the creation of all animals and creatures of the earth and of man, as the glory and summit of created things, made in the image and likeness of God, intrusted with dominion over all living things, and with the duty of subduing and replenishing the earth. After the sea has teemed with fish and the air with birds, the earth also has to be filled. Whether the writer regards animals as made of the dust of the earth or springing out of it, as in Milton's famous description, is not stated; but it is a conception which we find in the Yahvist (ii, 19) and in other parts of Scripture (Psalm civ, 29; Ecclesiastes iii, 20), as well as in classical writers.

VERSE 26. "And God said, Let us make man."

i. The same question rises here as in the use of the plural Elohim. We ask with Isaiah (xl, 13, 14), "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge and shewed to him the way of understanding?" The word "us" has been regarded as implying God and Wisdom (or the Logos); or the Trinity; or God in conjunction with the Angels (iii, 22). It is probably only another instance of the plural of majesty. Dillmann, indeed, makes the objection that the use of the plural by kings or great potentates was but a custom of the Hebrews until they derived it from the Greeks and Persians, as in Ezra iv, 18; I. Maccabees x, 19; but, as the date of the Priestly writer is late,

¹ Job xxxi, 26-28.² ἐξαγαγετω.³ *Producant.*

he may well have been acquainted with their usage, or may even have adopted it from natural reverence. Thus in Joshua xxiv, 19, we have the plural Elohim of *dôshîm*, "a Holy God," in apposition to the singular pronoun "he." It is, however, something more than a mere plural of excellence. It involves the self-consultation of one whose manifold glories can only be indicated by a plural word. The LXX. read the plural, though the Talmudists say that to prevent mistake (and Rashi adds especially to exclude dualism) they read it in the singular, and that they made the same change in Genesis xi, 7.

ii. "Man"—Adam. The derivation of the word is uncertain; it cannot be from *adamah*, earth. The earth creatures are distinguished under three classes: The behemah (of which the plural is behemoth) implies the larger grass-eating cattle, including the elephant; the remes, all sorts of worms and reptiles; and the *chayyath ha'aretz*, the wild beasts. These are not specially blest, because they form but a part of the sixth day's work.

iii. In our image (*tselem*) and in our likeness (*d'moth*). Attempts have been made to draw a distinction between the two words *tselem*, "image," as implying general outward aspect, and *d'moth*, "likeness," as describing inward resemblance; but in usage they do not seem to be markedly separate, and either may be used alone, as *tselem* in Wisdom ix, 6, and *d'moth* in v, 1. The latter word is slightly more abstract in significance and is here used to intensify the former.

iv. Wherein does the likeness and similitude of man to God exist?

a. Not in moral perfection, for man instantly fell; but solely in man's God-given faculties—in reason and conscience, in self-realization, power of thought and imagination, and in freedom of the will.¹

b. It is, of course, in no sense corporeal, since—except in poetic anthropomorphism—God is invariably represented throughout Scripture as a Spirit, without body, parts, or passions.² Other nations imagined that their gods were simply men of surpassing size and beauty; but not so the Hebrews. It was needless, therefore, for Symmachus, in his version, to tone down the expression into "he made man *erect*"; or for other ancient versions in other places (Psalm viii, 5; Genesis v, 1, ix, 6, etc.) to make the likeness to Elohim a likeness to angels. It is true that there was the sign of man's dignity in "the human face divine." "The vital spark of heavenly flame" was enshrined in a mortal tabernacle more perfect than that of all God's other creatures, and such as inspired dread and awe into them (Genesis ix, 2); but the likeness of God is not transient and outward, it is subjective; it is eternal.

c. And this was always rightly understood by the Jews. Thus, the son of Sirach says (xvii, 1-13) that "The Lord created man of the earth, and turned him into it again"; but that "He made them according to his image," in strength, dignity, dominion, understanding, speech, counsel, knowledge; in giving them the law of life for an heritage, making with them "an everlasting covenant," shewing them his "judgments" and "the majesty of his glory," that they might declare his works with understanding.

d. Again in the Book of Wisdom we read "God created man to be immortal, and made him in image of his own eternity." A passage in the Talmud mentions five points in which the soul resembles God: (1) It fills the body as God fills the bones. (2) It sees and is unseen. (3) It supports the body as God supports the Universe. (4) It is pure as he is pure. (5) It is like God, hidden in innermost recesses.³ But to these particulars of resemblance must certainly be added, with Saint Basil, man's prerogative of the freedom of the will.

e. It is in these senses, then, that God made man "a little lower than Elohim,"⁴ and "crowned him with glory and honor," however much he may be "a thing of naught whose

¹ See I. Corinthians xi, 7; Ephesians iv, 24; Colossians iii, 10; James iii, 9.

² Exodus xx, 4; Deuteronomy iv, 12; Isaiah xxxi, 3, etc.

³ Berachoth xvi, 1a. ⁴ Psalm viii, 5; Hebrews ii, 7-9.

days pass away like a shadow." In himself he is thus "the image and glory of God" (I. Corinthians xi, 7) and "made after the similitude of God" (James iii, 9); and when he has dimmed, though not obliterated, that divine image, Christ restores to him "the new man, which is renewed unto [full] knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Colossians iii, 10) — "the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Ephesians iv, 24 — Revised Version).

f. This affinity of man with God was not unknown even to the heathen. Saint Paul reminded the philosophers of Athens of this fact, quoting to them Aratus and Callimachus.¹ "The God," he said, "that made the world . . . giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and he made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth . . . that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he is not far from each one of us; for in him we live and move and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said:

‘For we are also his offspring.’”

Thus we find Sophocles, in his splendid chorus, dwelling on the mighty intellectual victories and attainments of man; and the Pythagoreans spoke of "man's kinnanship with God." Xenophon says "the soul of man and other human qualities partake of the nature of the Deity," and Cicero speaks of men as "like the gods" (*Similes Deorum*). Lucretius sings that "we are all sprung from celestial seed." Hipparchus calls our soul "a part of heaven"; Horace describes it as a "particle of divine breath"; and Juvenal says that we alone have had assigned to us an intellect worthy of veneration, and are "capable of divine things," and "have received, transmitted to us from heaven's high citadel, a moral sense which brutes prone and stooping toward the earth are lacking in." Exactly the same conception is found in the cosmogonic mythologies of the Babylonians and Persians; and in the Greek myth of man's receiving the soul from Athene after he had been fashioned in clay by Prometheus.

g. Nor was this any idle theory born from the fumes and hallucinations of human pride. On the contrary, it was the central truth which gives grandeur to the beatings of man's heart, inspires holiness into his aims and hope into his life. Moses again and again in his laws founds the feeling of humanity and of common brotherhood on the divine affinities of man. "I am the Lord" is a consideration which suffices as the basis for the most loving and tender regulations, just as in the New Testament there is an infinite pathos of appeal for all who suffer in the words "for whom Christ died." No one has expressed the sanctifying dignity of these thoughts more nobly than Milton in his "Reason of Church Government," when he writes: "He that holds himself in reverence and due esteem both for the dignity of God's image upon him, and for the price of his redemption which he thinks is visibly marked upon his forehead, thinks himself both a fit person to do the noblest and godliest deeds, and far better worth than to deject and defile with such a debasement as sin is, himself, so highly ransomed and ennobled to a new friendship and filial relation with God. Nor can he fear so much the offense and reproach of others as he dreads and would blush at the reflection of his own severe and modest eye upon himself, if it should see him doing or imagining that which is sinful, though in the deepest secrecy."

h. In verse 27 the writer, filled with the sublimity of his own narration, seems to break into spontaneous rhythm to express his gladness:

"So God created man in his own image,
In the image of God created he him;
Male and female created he them."

So mighty a thought seems to require emphatic repetition, for no question is raised here, nor

¹ Acts xvii, 24-29.

any indication given, as to whether God created mankind in a single pair or in many pairs; nor is any difference of time indicated between the creation of Adam and that of Eve.¹ Such inquiries were foreign to the writer's immediate aim. It is an error to assume that the divine image has been altogether displaced by sin. It is asserted after the Fall as a reason for the punishment of every murderer.² Saint James says of the tongue "therewith bless we the Lord and Father, and therewith curse we men, who are made in the image of God."

In verse 28, man, though classed among the *terrena animantia*, is endowed with dominion over all the living denizens of earth, and air, and sea, but in verse 29 he receives no permission to take their lives for food.

i. To man is granted for his daily sustenance every herb, and the fruit of every tree; and every green herb is set apart also for the use of all the living creatures of air and earth. It is clear that the writer takes the view adopted in so many cosmogonies, that men in the golden age of their infancy were vegetarian in diet, and that man did not sustain his own existence by robbing innocent animals of theirs. This, too, is the state which, in the ideal of the prophets, is to replace the present ages of bloodshed and rapine in the golden Messianic days; "The wolf shall . . . dwell with the lamb, . . . and the lion eat straw like the ox."³ Such a belief formed part of the religion of the Brahmins and Buddhists, as it did of the ancient Pythagoreans and Manichees.

ii. It might have been objected to this view that, by the very law of their construction, the world of creatures is a world of rapine and prey, and that "Nature, red in beak and claw with rapine," shrieks against this creed. The answer is that the revealer of the past, like the prophet of the future, is not troubled with such difficulties. It did not occur to him to ask how carnivorous animals could eat straw like the ox. He is dealing not with the actual but with the ideal—not with "ruined world and sinful man," but with man in the time of his first innocence, and with an ideal world into which death had not yet intruded.

iii. On the other hand, he does not disturb us with pictures of the superhuman sire, and impossible perfection of Adam. This is a favorite theme of the Rabbis in the Talmud and such fancies continued till later times, as when South says that "a Newton was but the rubbish of an Adam."⁴ The writer of this chapter attributes to the first man no such supereminence, either of beatific vision or of moral perfection. He presents him to us simply as the father of the race, created after God's similitude, which his posterity inherit, though much obscured by sin.

VERSE 31. At the close of his creative work, God contemplates it all and pronounces it to be not only "good" but "very good." Not only did "the morning stars sing together and all the sons of God shout for joy," but God himself, the Lord himself, rejoiced in his works. And evening was and morning was; the sixth day.

THE SEVENTH DAY.

(GENESIS II, 1 TO 3.)

The division of chapters is here altogether unfortunate. These verses belong on every ground to the first chapter and form part of the narrative of the Priestly writer (P).

They furnish, in fact, one of the reasons for the preceding narrative, which, though it serves vastly higher ends, was doubtless intended by the writer, in accordance with the uniform design which runs through his entire work, to narrate the institution of the sabbath and explain its deepest sanctions.

Six days sufficed for the completion of the heavens and the earth and "all their host." The word host (*tsaba*) is here used generally of the stars of heaven and the living things of

¹ Compare Matthew xix, 4.

² Genesis ix, 6.

³ Isaiah xi, 7, lxv, 25.

⁴ Sermon "On the State of Man before the Fall."

earth. Usually the word is applied to the stars only; or to the angels for whom they might stand as bright symbols; or to the forces of nature, the winds and lightnings.¹ In Nehemiah (ix, 6) "the heavens with all their host" are distinguished from "the earth and all that is therein."

"And on the seventh day God ended his work."

In the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Septuagint, the old Syriac, the Book of Jubilees and the Bereshith Rabbah, for "the Seventh day" we have "the Sixth day" and it is not wholly impossible that the seventh (Hebrew, *hashsh'bî'i*) may have been confused with "the sixth" (*hashshîshî*) or may have been corrected into "the sixth." Another but dubious way of removing the difficulty is to translate "finished" as a pluperfect "had finished";² or the phrase may merely mean that the work ended with the beginning of the Seventh day.

"And he rested on the Seventh Day."³

When we speak of the "rest" of God, we are clearly in the region of analogy and anthropomorphism, in which things divine and incommunicable are shadowed forth by the only language which is humanly intelligible. In another and higher sense God's work never ceases.⁴ "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?"⁵ And in another sense, there is never any pause in the divine operations; they are unresting as they are unhasting. Jesus answered them "My Father worketh even until now, and I work."⁶ Again the word "labor" is only a dim and distant analogy. To speak is not to labor, to will is not to toil. But God gave the sabbath as a boon — a necessary as well as a blessed boon — to man; and in order to sanctify it he based it on some incommunicable fact in which there is a sympathy between the divine and the human. "Ye shall keep the sabbath . . . it is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days Yahveh made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed."⁷ This is the reason why God blessed the seventh day, and why the writer emphatically repeats what he had said respecting the rest of God. How intensely the institution of the sabbath served the imagination and occupied the thoughts of the later Jews, we see from endless passages in the Talmud. It is related of Shammai that all his life he was eating for the honor of the sabbath. But Hillel had another way; all he did was in the name of heaven, as it is said (Psalm lxxviii, 19, Revised Version, margin), "Blessed be the Lord, day by day."

It is only in the Priestly document that we find any account, or any traces, of a pre-Mosaic sabbath. The writer desired to place that merciful institution under loftier and earlier sanctions than such as arose from its being a simple ordinance of humanity, or a redemption from bondage (Deuteronomy v, 14, 15).

Moreover, also, we read in Ezekiel (xx, 12, Revised Version, margin), "I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I the Lord do sanctify them." Although the Jews were the only nation which gave to the idea of the sabbath its richest and most sacred meaning, yet the Assyrians also possessed the word sabbath, and called it a "day of the rest of hearts." In a calendar of the interesting month Elul we find the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th days marked as *dies nefasti*, in which no work can be done, but they are also days of evil omen on which no sacrifice can be offered.

VERSE 4a. "These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created."

i. All critics are practically agreed that the narrative of P ends here, to be resumed in chapter v, and many have supposed that this verse originally stood before the first verse of

¹ See I. Kings xxii, 19; Joshua v, 14; Psalm ciii, 21.

² So Calvin, Eichhorn, Gabler, Kalisch; but Dillmann calls this ungrammatical.

³ The name "Sabbath" is derived from shabath, "to rest."

⁴ Psalm civ, 27-32.

⁵ Isaiah xl, 28.

⁶ John v, 17 (Revised Version).

⁷ Exodus xxxi, 14-17.

Genesis and was placed here by the Redactor who united the various documents of Genesis into their present form. Certainly in the nine other instances of the recurrence of the phrase "These are the generations," it stands at the beginning of a narrative, not at the end of it; and the *tol'dôth* (as in v, 1, vi, 9, x, 1) refers to what follows, not to what precedes. It is a phrase only found in P.

ii. The word *tol'dôth* is usually applied to persons, not to things, since it properly means "generations"; i. e., "begettings." It is here applied by analogy to the material Universe. (Compare Psalm xc, 2). It is from this expression (*sepher tol'dôth*), rendered by the LXX. Book of the Genesis (in Genesis v, 1), that we derive the name "Genesis" for the book which the Jews called from its first word *Bereshîth*.

iii. In the word "when they were created" (*b'hibbār'ām*), the "h" is written small. This was probably meant by the Massoretes to indicate that there was a variant reading. The Kabbalists gave mystic reasons for the small letter. They said it indicated that all things should also fade and perish; or that, by transposition, the word may be read "on account of Abraham." Here, then, at the close of one account of the creation, we must pause for some separate consideration, which want of space compels us to treat in the briefest manner.

1. It should be noticed as regards the Six Days' work that it is arranged according to a definite scheme in two parallel parts, thus:

First Day, Light.

Second Day, Water and the heavens.

Fourth Day, The orbs of light.

Fifth Day, Fishes, the inhabitants of the waters, and birds of the heavens.

Third Day, Dry land and vegetation.

Sixth Day, Animals and man.¹

It is obvious that the two triads of days have some relation to each other. The first three complete the inanimate creation; the fifth and sixth the animate creation. The first three days have been called "the three separations of light from darkness, water from water, and land from water." The fourth day seems, in this respect, to break the order; and some have imagined that there is a silent reference to the ancient and widespread notion of the constellations as living creatures; but of this there is little or no certain trace elsewhere in any of the conceptions of the Hebrews.

2. The notion that God is the cause or creator of evil, though there is a different and secondary sense in which God, as the permitter of catastrophe and misfortune, may be called its creator²—is carefully excluded. Moral evil is due exclusively to the abuse of the free will of man.³

3. The parallels to the Hebrew cosmogony are numerous and cannot be given at length.

a. The Babylonian account of the creation is given in a composite form by the Chaldean Berosus in his "History of Babylonia." It forms part of an epic which has been discovered in the cuneiform tablets of Babylonia and Assyria. It is perhaps not older than the seventh century B. C. It begins with describing the chaos of the deep (*Tiāmat*); recognizes six days; and follows much the same order of creation as Genesis. The resemblances extend even to words; but the confused polytheism and materialism of the Babylonian cosmogonical myths are in sharp contrast with the simplicity of the Bible. Where the Assyrian or Babylonian poet saw the action of deified forces of nature, the Hebrew writer sees only the will of the one Supreme God. The Assyrian poem is mainly a paean in honor of the Sun-god, and the triumph of light over darkness. There is no such antagonism in Genesis. "The Tel el-Amarna tablets have proved that Babylonian influence was strongly felt in Canaan before its conquest by the Israelites."

¹ St. Thomas Aquinas pointed out long ago that the first three days were mainly days of preparation and separation, the last three of adornment and use. ² Amos iii, 6; Isaiah xlv, 7. ³ James i, 13.

The following words occur in the Chaldean account of creation (first tablet):

“When the upper region was not yet called heaven
And the abyss of Hades had not yet opened its arms,
When the chaos of waters gave birth to all of these,
And the waters were gathered into one place.”

From the fifth tablet we find that the Babylonians also made the sabbath coeval with creation:

“He fixed up constellations whose figures were like animals,
And from the days of the year he appointed festivals.

.
The moon he appointed to rule the night,

.
Every month without fail he made holy assemblies.
On the Seventh Day he appointed a holy day
*And to leave all business he commanded.”*¹

b. One of the oldest of the Hindoo cosmogonies may be found in the Laws of Manu, i, 5, ff.

c. The Greek views are given by Hesiod, “*Theogonia*,” 116, ff., and are examined in Zeller, “*Philosophie der Griechen*,” I, pp. 71-89.

d. The Egyptian are given by Brugseh, “*Rel. u. Mythologie*,” 1888.

e. The Phœnician views are found in Philo Byblius (preserved by Eusebius, “*Præparatio Evangelica*,” I, 10).

f. The Persian are given in the “Zend Avesta.” In all the other cosmogonies there are points of resemblance more or less close to the sacred narrative. They prove the wide diffusion of a common tradition. It is unnecessary and impossible here to enter into details. A brief but admirable sketch of ancient cosmogonies is given by Dillmann, “*Genesis*,” pp. 1-12.

4. The blessed and eternal truths which are predominant in this chapter, of which the institution of the covenant-day of rest is the attestation, are

i. That God is the Almighty Creator of the Universe. This is the most fundamental truth of all, and its truth has been again and again attested even by men of marked skeptical bias, who have, indeed, in many instances, been led to the full acceptance of it after long years of agnosticism or unbelief.

ii. That he created all things in absolute accordance with his own will, and after the archetypal ideas in his own mind.

iii. That man is the supremest among the works of God’s earthly creation.

iv. That all which God creates is good, and not evil. Thus the writer flings the only bridge which can be thrown over those vast and inconceivable abysses which separate the organic from the inorganic, and the animate from the inanimate; which separate the mineral from the vegetable—say, the rock from the faintest film of gray or orange-colored lichens which grow on it; which separate even the highest form of vegetable life from the lowest animal life; the oak from the tiniest insect on its leaves; and which separate the highest of the animals from man.

5. The story of creation may be understood in various ways. In former ages, and down to our own days, it was for the most part understood in strict literalism; but that view is now all but universally abandoned, and it may be seriously doubted whether such was even the intention of the writer.

i. It has been subjected to all kinds of violent hypotheses by which, for instance, day may mean millions of years, or in which millions of years may be supposed to elapse between the second and third verses; in order to force it into decent accord with the certain discoveries of astronomy and geology. Such attempts are wholly unsuccessful; the narrative cannot by any

¹ See a full translation in George Smith, “*Chaldean Genesis*,” pp. 61-112.

extremes of conjecture be made to harmonize closely or continuously with scientific facts. The notion that the earth was made in six days; that each of the great phases of creation sprang into being at an instantaneous word; that the present world was created some 6,000 years ago; that the sun and stars were called into existence after the earth; that all kinds of vegetation were created first, then all cetaceans, fishes, and birds, then all beasts and reptiles, and then man, are views which stand in discord with what we have been taught by the splendid labors of science. The faintest semblance of harmony between Genesis and physical science can only be obtained by a licentious artificiality and casuistry of exegetic invention. "That the earth is a ball which is always turning upon its axis and at the same time pursuing its rapid course round the sun; that the whole earth which seems so great to us is no more in comparison to the universe, than a single grain of sand on a seabeach thousands of miles in length; that the sun alone is a million and a half times larger than our globe — all this was unknown to the Israelites. For them the earth was a disk washed round by the ocean, over which the firmament rose like a giant cupola, while sun, moon, and stars moved on the inner surface of this vault."¹ We repeat that "The Scriptures have never yet revealed, nor were they ever intended to reveal, a single scientific truth." The false prejudice which led men to assume that they were meant for this purpose led to the cruel priestly tyranny and violent religious intolerance which has for so many centuries hindered knowledge, thwarted progress, and persecuted those great benefactors of mankind, who set forth to us the revelation of God in his works. Romish priests made Galileo abjure, on his knees, the truth of the Copernican system. Spanish priests denounced the enlightened views of Columbus as a blasphemous heresy. English priests imprisoned Roger Bacon, and abused and anathematized the pioneer of geological science. In such conduct they acted after their kind. They behaved like the Chinese who piled up their sacred erockery in the path of the first locomotive, hoping thereby to stay its course. It is time that we should prevent the sanctity of Scripture from being ever again abused, as it has been in the past, by ignorance and human dogmatism to arrest progress and darken counsel, to light the balefires of the Inquisition, to sanction the falsities of the Jesuit and to rivet the fetters of the slave.

ii. The narrative has been interpreted *ideally*, and this at least is certain, that the ideal interpretation, while it leaves, on one side, all questions which have their origin in preconceived dogma, and does not attempt to remove self-created difficulties by schemes of impossible casuistry which alienate straightforward minds, yet goes to the heart of the instruction which the writer most certainly regarded as supremely precious, and tries to grasp those truths which are at once indisputable, and are of intrinsic and eternal significance.² The object of the writers of Holy Writ was not to anticipate scientific discoveries, but to make known all that is necessary for the inspiration of man's life and the salvation of man's soul.

Let me quote on this subject the testimony of a late eminent geologist, Dr. Buckland, dean of Westminster. He saw, as many men of science have seen, the true meaning of the first chapter of Genesis. "The earth," he says, "from her deep foundations unites with the celestial orbs that roll through boundless space, to declare the glory and show forth the praise of their common Author and Preserver; and the voice of natural religion accords harmoniously with the testimonies of Revelation in ascribing the origin of the universe to the will of one eternal and dominant Intelligence, the Almighty Lord and Supreme First Cause of all things that subsist, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, 'before the mountains were brought forth, or even the earth and the world were made, God from everlasting and world without end.'"

¹ Oort, "The Bible for Learners," Boston, 1878, Vol. I, p. 39.

² No reconciliation of the six days into geological periods is necessary. It is certain that the author of the first chapter of Genesis, whether Moses or someone else, knew nothing of geology or astronomy. Bishop Worcester, "Dictionary of the Bible," Vol. I, p. 763.

The true comment on the significance of the first chapter of Genesis is the eighth Psalm :

“O Lord, our Lord,
How excellent is thy name in all the earth!
Who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
The Moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained ;
What is man, that thou art mindful of him ?
And the Son of Man that thou visitest him?
For thou hast made him but little lower than God,
And crownest him with glory and honor.
Thou madest him to have dominion over the work of thy hands ;
Thou hast put all things under his feet.

.

O Lord, our Lord,
How excellent is thy name in all the earth !” (Revised Version.)

CREATION AND EDEN.

(GENESIS II, 4b TO 25.)

We now begin the separate narrative of the creation by the Jehovistic writer (J). He is a writer who throws over his narrative an intensely interesting and human coloring. His style is vivid, earnest, simple, frankly anthropomorphic (ii, 7, 19, 21, 22, iii, 8, 22, etc.). He occupies himself very little, or not at all, with legalistic and ceremonial institutions, but deals exclusively with the highest moral considerations.

That the authorship is different from that of the previous chapter is obvious at once from the wide diversities (1) of object, (2) of details, and (3) of style.

1. In this chapter, though he gives a summary account of the creation, the author is far more concerned with the deepest and most absorbing of all human problems—the nature and the fall of man.

2. His retrospective narrative of the origin of the world cannot have been meant to be *supplementary* to the former, because it differs very widely from it. “In the first cosmogony vegetation is immediately produced by the will of God (i, 11, 12); in the second, its existence is made dependent on rain, and mists, and agricultural labors (ii, 5, 6): in the first, the earth emerges from the waters; in the second, it appears dry, sterile, and sandy: in the first, man and his wife are created together (i, 27); in the second, the wife is formed later, and from a part of man (ii, 21-23): in the former, man bears the image of God, and is made the ruler of the whole earth (i, 26, 27); in the latter, his earth-formed body is only animated by the breath of life, and he is placed in Eden to cultivate and to guard it (ii, 7, 15): in the former, the birds and beasts are created before man (i, 20, 24, 26); in the latter, man before birds and beasts (ii, 7, 19). It is true that the differences are mainly in subordinate, and so to speak incidental, details; and it is also true that they can be explained away by false grammar (*e. g.*, by turning perfects into pluperfects) and all manner of untenable casuistries. But these differences—which are wholly unimportant as regards the lofty spiritual purpose of the narrator—lie patent before every clear and truthful reader.

3. The style of the writers also differs.

In P the word for God’s creating is *bara*; in J it is *asah*, and *yátsar*. In P we have “beasts of the earth”; in J “beasts of the field.” In J we have frequently recurring phrases which in P do not occur or only rarely. Above all, in J we have Yahveh (“Jehovah”) almost throughout; in P we have *Elohim* throughout till we come to Exodus vi, 3. “The whole of this second narrative,” says Dean Payne Smith, “is evidently anthropomorphic.”

In the previous history *Elohim* commands and it is done. Here he (or rather Yahveh) “forms, and builds, and plants, and breathes into his work and is the companion and friend of the creatures he has made.”¹

In chapter ii, 4*b*, we are at once met by *Yahveh-Elohim* (“the Lord God”) in the place of the *Elohim* of the first chapter. It is remarkable that except in Genesis the combination *Yahveh-Elohim* only occurs in the Pentateuch in Exodus ix, 30. If the Yahvist originally used the combination here, it could only have been to point out that by Yahveh he meant the *same* One and Supreme God as the one mentioned in the previous chapter. But, since the date of P is probably *far* later than the date of J, and since, therefore, this is the *earlier* of the narratives, it is most probable that the combination of the two divine names is really due to the final Redactor—whether Ezra or another—who united into one book the ancient narratives.

We are here shown a rainless earth (verses 5 to 7) on which was no vegetation; on the surface of this dry plain arose a fertilizing rain which watered the ground. Then Yahveh-Elohim formed the man (*ha-adam*) out of the dust of the ground (*adāmah*), and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.

i. We note first that Adam is rather a collective than an individual name—not Adam, but “*the Adam*.”

ii. Next, by one of those deep-reaching paronomasie of which the sacred writers are fond, *Adam* is connected with, if not derived from, *adāmah* (earth), just as in Latin it was (erroneously) fancied that *homo* was connected with *humus*. The Jews were “analogists,” not “anomalists”—that is, they believed in the innate force and sacredness of words; hence they supposed that language was stamped with an inherent and sacred fitness which gave mysterious meanings even to its assonances.

Further, since man’s mortal body “returns to the dust as it was” (iii, 19; Ecclesiastes xii, 7; Job x, 9), it was natural to regard it as made of dust or clay. We find a similar belief alike among the polished Greeks, the practical Romans, the thoughtful Hindoos, and the wild North American Indians.

iii. Adam is not, however, *derived* from *adāmah* “earth.” Josephus derives it from *adam*, “red,” because virgin earth is red.² Others derive it from *dm*, which is equivalent to *d’môth* (Ezekiel xix, 10, Revised Version, margin), because man is made in the image of God. From the inscription on the sarcophagus of the Phœnician king, Eshmunazar, we find that *adam* was sometimes used in the sense of *dam*, “blood.” It is hardly worth while to mention other conjectures, and, in point of fact, the true derivation of the word Adam remains undiscovered. It was a far deeper part of the writer’s object to point out that the soul of man is a breath, a gleam, an effluence of the Divine. “Thou hast granted me life and favor,” says Job, “and thy care hath preserved my spirit.” Man became a living being “in whose nostrils is a breath” (Isaiah li, 22).

iv. Of the various heathen parhelia, so to speak, of this narrative we may specially note the legend how Prometheus made a man of clay which the gods inspired with life. There is a fine ancient gem representing the helpless clay form upheld by the hands of its fashioner, while over its head Athene holds a butterfly—the Psyche, or type of life. In the Koran, the first man was called “Adam,” “the chosen of God.”

VERSE 8. “The Lord planted a Garden in Eden, eastward, and there he placed the new-made man that he might till it.”

The primeval “Garden in Eden”³ is found also in many primeval mythologies, and man was, by the nature of the case, primitively an agriculturalist. These statements belong to the simple framework of the lovely and pathetic narrative which enshrines the deep psychological

¹ “Genesis,” p. 19.

² Josephus, “Antiquities,” I, 1, §2.

³ For allusions to the Garden of God see Genesis xiii, 10; Joel ii, 3; Isaiah li, 3; Ezekiel xxviii, 13.

philosopheme of the Fall of Man. In all man's speculations on his earliest past he has imagined a golden age—an age of simplicity and innocence. Here the innocence is rightly represented as only passive and negative. It is not the innocence of formed choice, but the nescience of positive ill doing, before the *conscience* was awakened by the first act of transgression. There is in the calm sanity of the sacred story, no trace whatever of the fantastic Rabbinic legends which represented Adam as a giant of immense strength, angelic beauty, and superhuman intellect.

VERSE 9. Having placed the man in the garden, God clothes it with a rich and pleasant vegetation and in the midst of it he placed the Tree of Life,¹ and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Whether there were any other mysterious reasons for the choice of the symbol of the Tree of Life growing in the midst of the garden we cannot tell, but there is probably a deep significance in its juxtaposition to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for according to the Yahvist it was only after the plucking of the forbidden fruit that Yahveh said, "Behold the man is become as one of us." This implied that the plucking of the fruit, if it had ruined and perverted his nature, had also in some measure widened its horizon, and made it necessary to prevent the eating of the fruit of the Tree of Life. A tree in its exceeding beauty is naturally regarded as an emblem of life, and is hence found in many mythologies. We find it on the frescoes of Babylon and Assyria. It is the *Haoma* of the Persians, "the king of trees," and the Indian *Katpawiksham*, the *pilpel* of immortality; and the esthetic *Ygdrasil* of the northern sagas, *whose leaves are the lives of men*.

1. The next five verses (10, 11, 12, 13, 14) are occupied with a description of the position of the Garden of Eden. From Eden went forth a river (*nahar*), and branched thence into four heads (*roshîm*), Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates.

i. The Euphrates is simply mentioned without any description of its course, since its name would be familiar to Hebrew readers, to whom, as often in the Old Testament, it was known as "the great river," and even as "the river." The etymology of the name remains uncertain.

ii. Scarcely less well known was the Hiddekel, or, to give it its Aryan name, the Tigris, called from the old Bactrian *tighri* "an arrow," the swift or arrowy stream.² It is vaguely described as flowing "before" (*qidmath*), literally in front of, Assyria.

iii. The Pison is described as "compasing the whole land of Havilah," which produces gold, bdellium, and the shoham-stone. *a.* The name Havilah is of very uncertain meaning. In Genesis x, 7, Havilah is a "son" of Cush, and in x, 29, a son of Joktan. From this we cannot tell whether the inhabitants were originally descendants of Ham (Ethiopians), or were Semitic, or a mixture of both. The name is perhaps derived from *chôl*, "sand." Havilah and Shur are distant extremes of the realm of Ishmael's descendants in Genesis xxv, 18 (I. Samuel xv, 7). Perhaps Havilah is a country between the Arabian and Persian gulfs. There are no certain traces of the name. In Genesis x, 7, 29, we find it in juxtaposition to Sheba and Ophir. Various writers have previously identified it with Colchis, with Chlavisei on the Caspian, with Kampila in Northwest India, with Aras, and other places. *b.* The productions of the country do not help us to identify it. Gold is found in many countries. What bdellium (*b'dolach*) is remains uncertain, as well as the derivation of the word. It may be a fragrant and transparent gum or crystal; or pearls. *c.* The *shoham* stone may be the beryl, or chrysoprase, or the onyx. It has also been identified with other varieties of chalcedony—the sardonix and sardius.

The name Pison means "the burster forth."

¹The "Tree of Life" became a proverbial phrase. Proverbs iii, 18, xi, 30, xiii, 12, xv, 4; Revelation ii, 7, xxii, 2, 14.

²Daniel x, 4.

iv. The Gihon is described as "compassing" the whole land of Ethiopia. This name also means "the burster forth." No one has ever identified the Pison or the Gihon, or made the geography indicated otherwise than wildly impossible, if the names of countries be taken in their only recognized significance. Of what use can further inquiry be when scarcely any two inquirers even now agree with each other? The Pison has been taken for the Nile (Saadia, etc.), the Ganges (Josephus and the Fathers), the Indus (Cosmas Indicopleustes), the Phasis (Reland, etc.), the river Baisch, in Arabia (Sprenger). The Gihon has been identified by the Fathers with the Nile (which would then have to rise in Asia, and flow round Ethiopia), the Ganges (Cosmas and Bertheau), the Indus (Redslob), the Araxes (Reland, and others) the Phasis (Link and Rôsemüller), the Halys (Kitto), the Danube (Ephrem Syrus), and many other rivers, including the Jordan. Friedrich Delitzsch regarded it as a canal; others as an arm of the sea, such as the Persian Gulf, and Josephus as part of the Ocean Stream.

Is it not, then, worse than idle to enter into interminable, tedious and wholly useless disquisitions as to the site of Eden? One theory is that the courses of all the rivers have been entirely and permanently altered by the Deluge—in which case further investigation is certainly superfluous.

"The Garden was in Eden." The name tells us nothing. The LXX. and Vulgate make an etymological error in connecting Eden with the meaning "delight," "loveliness," for, as Schrader shows, the word is not Semitic at all, but is the Assyrian word *i-di-nu* "a field," or "a plain."

Hosts of writers have devoted many pages and even entire books to the discovery of the site of Paradise. The results have been so monstrously discrepant as to show the utter futility of such disquisitions. It has been located by different inquirers in Palestine, in Arabia, in Persia, in Bactria, in India around the Caucasus, in Syria, in the Canary Islands, and outside the earth altogether—beyond the Ocean Stream. Indeed, scarcely any part of the habitable globe has remained without the honor of being regarded as the happy abode of our first parents. Warren, in an elaborate monograph, placed it at the North Pole, and others at the Mountains of the Moon. And if we had sufficient data to show us what exact spot was intended, wherein should we be the wiser? All that we can say is that the sacred writer seems to place the cradle of mankind, as the Persian legend does, somewhere on the tablelands of Armenia; but his concern with geographical questions was quite infinitesimal. His much deeper aim is to indicate the origin of sin in the heart of man. Only two considerations seem possible.

i. Some suppose these verses (10 to 14) to be a later gloss of a pragmatic character, inserted into the text by one who saw in the story of the Fall a material history rather than an ethopœia. There is no evidence, textual or otherwise, in proof of this view.

ii. The other sees nothing more than an indication of the general conviction that the human race, or at any rate those families of the human race with which alone the writer was immediately concerned, originated somewhere in Central Asia. In attempting a closer geographical indication the Yahvist could write only from the standpoint of the universal lack of geography in an age when there were no maps, and no surveys, and only very limited voyages or travels; and in which knowledge of the earth's surface was of the most elementary description. The writer, perhaps seven centuries before Christ, hardly shows greater acquaintance with the subject than is shown by Cosmas Indicopleustes, who wrote more than five centuries after Christ. If even Josephus, writing 90 A. D., could be capable of an error so astounding as to regard the Ganges and the Nile as branches of the same river, how can we be surprised at similar ignorance of details, wholly apart from his general purpose, in this ancient Hebrew whose knowledge in such subjects was simply that of his own day?

The general conception of Eden corresponds with that of the Greek Hesperides; the Hindoo Mount Meru, guarded by dragons and watered by four rivers; the Persian Heden,

where Ahriman tempted the first men in the shape of a serpent; and the Chinese Kuen-lun, with its four streams which fertilize the world.

THE FIRST MAN AND THE FIRST COMMAND.

(GENESIS II, 15 TO 17.)

The Adam is brought to the Garden and is placed there in a region of delight, but not that he may luxuriate in idleness. He is set to till and to guard it. The tilth we can understand, for it would be very easy and delightful, not in "the sweat of the brow" as in the stubborn soil which brought forth thorns and thistles (iii, 17). What is meant by "guarding it" we are not told. In the Persian legend Ormuzd bids men guard their home of bliss from the cruel demonic forces of nature, which are under the sway of Ahriman; but there is no room for such a view here, though Delitzsch adopts it. The old Jewish Book of Jubilees says (chapter iii) that the man was to guard Eden against wild beasts; but neither is that easy to understand. The man is allowed to eat of every tree, even of the Tree of Life. In accordance with the universal belief of the ancients he is a vegetarian. But he is sternly forbidden to eat "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," and that for his own sake, since "in the day—*i. e.*, when—thou eatest thereof, dying, thou shalt die." The death spoken of is, as so often in Scripture, spiritual and moral death, so that sin is death. It is perhaps needless to render with Symmachus, "thou shalt become liable to death."

The paradise of the race is here assimilated to the paradise of childish innocence in the childhood of every individual, before the child has learnt "to refuse the evil and choose the good" (Isaiah vii, 16). It is the knowledge, and the subsequent choice, of evil instead of good which is the perverting and deathful force in the soul of man.

THE CREATION OF WOMAN.

(GENESIS II, 18 TO 24.)

Man was lonely. In the narrative of P (Genesis i, 27) we are told of man, as of the beasts: "Male and female created he them." Here he is solitary in the midst of paradise, and God pitying his condition, seeks a helpmeet for him; literally "at his side." So, to give man companionship, God made the beasts and the birds out of the ground. The attempt to harmonize this with the first chapter by rendering the verb "had made" is a grammatically untenable resource of harmonists.

In the next verse we have a curious glimpse into the views of the sacred writer respecting the Origin of Language. The notice could appear to him by no means important, because, in the "analogist" views of the Jews, the name of anything seemed to bear a stamp of its essential nature. Nothing is more probable than that animal names formed a main part of the earliest attempts at human language, and that, as was the all but invariable primitive resource, they were onomatopoeic, *i. e.*, in vocal imitation of natural sounds.

Man exercised his heaven-implanted faculty of language in naming the animals; but there was no real companionship for him in them; no sufficiently close homogeneity of nature.¹ "Adam," says South, "came into the world a philosopher, which sufficiently appears by his writing the nature of things upon their names." There is an unfathomable abyss between the intelligence of the most advanced animal and the lowest of the human race.

Then God created² woman (Genesis ii, 22). The formation of Eve is narrated in the most naïvely anthropomorphic manner. God cast Adam into a deep sleep, took out one of his ribs.

¹ "A helpmeet for him," literally, "A help as before him," or "corresponding to him."—Spurrell. In the clause above "Adam" appears as a proper name; in this chapter and elsewhere it is generic, "the Adam"—"the man."

² *Banah*, literally, "builded."—King James Version, margin.

God molded it into a woman, and brought her to the man.¹ He instantly recognized the intimate closeness of her relation to himself, and called her woman (*ishshah*) because she was taken out of man (*ish*). The Vulgate keeps up the assonance by rendering "woman" *virago* and "man" *vir*, as Luther afterward did by his *männin* and *mann*.

This story embodies a vivid ideal upon which the writer bases a truth of eternal validity — the indissoluble sanctity of the marriage bond, as forming the commencement of a new home life, which is even to supersede the sacred home life of earlier years.²

Then the chapter concludes with one of those swift, luminous touches, which in the briefest space, contains a world of significance. To indicate the natural and unclouded innocence of souls, to which as yet evil was unknown, the writer adds that "they were both naked; the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." As Milton writes with that majestic purity which enables him to speak as spirits less starry and virginal than his would hardly have dared to do.

"Then was not guilty shame. Dishonest shame
Of nature's works, honor dishonorable,
Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind,
With shews instead, mere shews of seeming pure,
And banished from man's life his happiest life —
Simplicity and spotless innocence!
So passed they naked on, nor shunned the sight
Of God or angel; for they thought no ill."³

But the literal acceptance of this picture-idea of the manner of the creation of woman from a rib of man, would be childish. This same remark applies to much of this early narrative. "The expressions of Moses," says Archbishop Sumner, whose orthodoxy no one will call in question, "are evidently adapted to the first familiar notions derived from the sensible appearances of the earth and heavens; and the absurdity of supposing that the literal interpretation of the terms of Scripture ought to interfere with the advancement of philosophical inquiry would have been as generally forgotten and renounced if the oppressors of Galileo had not found a place in history."⁴

CHAPTER III.

(GENESIS III.)

THE TEMPTATION—THE FALL—THE PENALTY AND THE CURSE—ADAM AND EVE—THE EXPULSION FROM PARADISE, AND THE CHERUBIM.

WE now enter on the consideration of a chapter which, if we read it solely with a view to understand and profit by the essential lessons which it was meant to teach, is as simple as it is profound; but which becomes baffling and inexplicable, if we attempt to push the interpretation of it into minute and irrelevant details. I have long been convinced that interminable commentaries recording all the vagaries of human fantasy and all the laborious futilities of human learning which have been heaped up by wandering exegetes, both Jewish and Christian, during century after century, are worse than useless. Guesswork, based on idle literalism,

¹ The word for rib (*tzela*) is in every other passage translated "side" (Vulgate, *costa*). "This is now bone, etc." "Now" means rather "at last" (literally, "this time"). In some Semitic dialects bone is equivalent to self.

² Matthew xix, 5: "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they two shall be one flesh." ³ "Paradise Lost," iv, 314-321. ⁴ Archbishop Sumner, "Records of Creation," I, p. 270.

is alike inconclusive and unsatisfactory. It only tends to divert the mind from spiritual truths. In this chapter, as in all the deeper parts of Scripture, the real word of God is "living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart."¹

The enormous difficulties which have been discovered, or created, in this chapter arise solely from neglecting the spirit of the narrative, and dwelling with unintelligent stolidity on every secondary detail of its form. They are difficulties due to the many ages which have elapsed since this deeply instructive and divinely profitable allegory of the dawn of sin in the human soul was written. They arise also from the vast differences between Eastern literature and the mode of thought and expression among those who have been molded under the wholly changed forces of modern civilization. Most of the insoluble problems which have been so interminably discussed with reference to this narrative of the Fall are such as would not have occurred at all to the ancient writer or to his contemporary readers. There are improbabilities, difficulties, etc., which would not have troubled either him or them since they are, as a Greek tragedian would have said, irrelevant. They in no wise interfere with the intended lessons.

I have used the word "allegory." Let no reader unaccustomed to the progress of modern thought be startled by the word. If he is uninstructed enough to regard it as a matter of faith and piety to understand literally the talking serpent, and the trees of Life and of Knowledge, there is nothing to prevent him from clinging to a belief which need not necessarily disturb for him the spiritual import of the story, but which otherwise has no concern with religion or with any truth of vital importance to the soul of man. And if, with the common methods of abuse and denunciation, he tries to enforce the same literalism on others of wider learning and stronger intelligence, he may be forgiven for a survival of the old tyrannical spirit—ecclesiastical dogmatism—which at present will do no harm to anyone but himself. Further, if he considers it a profitable or intelligent use of time to discuss with rabbinites and medieval interpreters, whether the serpent originally stood erect, whether it had legs, whether—as represented in medieval paintings—it had a human head, etc., it is perfectly open for him to do so. All that need be said is that, if in any other Eastern book we met with magic trees² and talking animals, we should not have a moment's hesitation in separating the symbolic forms from the inward meaning, and that even English theologians—who have always been so intensely conservative as only to admit new truths long after they have become the merest commonplaces of German theology—have, as far back as the days of Bishop Warburton and Bishop Horsley, admitted that it is in no sense a matter of faith to give literal acceptance to emblematic teaching.³

The Adam and his wife are living in paradise. Their state of innocence consists in ignorance of any commandment but one, and in total inexperience of the consequences which arise from that changed relation to God caused by the violation of his behests. It is a type of that condition through which all souls pass in the days of childish innocence. "The holiness of children," says Cardinal Manning, "is the very type of saintliness; and the most perfect conversion is but a hard and distant return to the holiness of a child." Such an absolute return is indeed impossible. The perfect innocence of a little child, as yet unconscious of the existence of evil, can never be restored; but God who has many tests, and who restores to even greater fullness of blessing his returning prodigals, can grant the grander innocence of evil known and refused for the untempted innocence which consists in nescience of forbidden things.

¹ Hebrews iv, 12 (Revised Version).

² Why should the Tree of Life be less a symbol in Genesis than it is in Revelation ii, 7, xxii, 2-14?

³ "The ideas which this language conveys are indeed allegorical, but they inform us of this, and of nothing but this, that immortal life was a thing extraneous to our nature."—Warburton, "Divine Legation," vii, 1, § 1. Bishop Horsley, "Sermon XVI."

How long did Adam and Eve continue in this state of paradisiacal bliss? The writer knows as little on that point as we do. Some conjectured that Adam—or in the wild Rabbinic legend of him and his first wife Lilith, by whom he became the father of all the demons—continued in Eden for an age. Others make his innocence last only for a moment. The Book of Jubilees says that he enjoyed paradise for seven years. A very common view has been that his Eden bliss lasted but for a single day. All such conjectures are the idlest of idle talk. They did not concern the sacred writer. He is an instructor of the world, sent forth from God to illuminate man's soul, not to gratify his curiosity; to warn him against the peril of temptation, not to make him an expert in prehistoric history. This object, as we have said, was to answer the perplexing, agitating, most important question—that is, the origin of human sin.

Whence does sin find entrance into the soul of man?

I. It is a question which has occupied the mind of man in every climate and every age. It is touched upon in every form of pagan mythology, and in many such mythologies receives an answer in some respects analogous to the one here indicated. It may, however, be said with the most indisputable truth that no mythological ethopœia shows anything like the marvelous depth, sanity, and simplicity of this narrative of Holy Writ, or is half so well calculated for the warning and instruction of the soul.

i. All alike have seen—all human beings who have attained to years of discretion have learnt by experience, more or less sad, more or less fatal—that the sources of sin are twofold. These sources are from without and from within; and sin results from the human soul succumbing to the union of the two. Whether there is a force, not ourselves, which *per se* makes for unrighteousness, is a question beyond our apprehension, which in any case does not concern us, but that there is such a force relatively to ourselves, depending on us for its deadliness, and causing all kinds of moral evil by our coöperation with it, is a matter of universal experience. “The tempting opportunity meets the susceptible disposition.” Saint James gives a psychological analysis of temptation which is of intense and searching accuracy, and which forms a perfect commentary on the narrative when he says (i, 14, 15), “Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust” (the ‘evil impulse’ of the Rabbis) “when it hath conceived, beareth sin; and the sin, when it is full grown, bringeth forth death.” Every child of Adam sins “after the similitude of Adam’s transgression” (Romans v, 14).

ii. Externally this force, this principle of evil, is described, symbolized, personified, so to speak incarnated, in the language of Scripture as an Evil Being of portentous reality for the human race—at once the Tempter, the Accuser (*Diabolos*, devil), and the Destroyer—Abaddon, Apollyon. He first leads us into sin; then with fiendish malignity charges us with the sin; hastily, unless we coöperate with the Power of salvation for our own rescue, destroys us utterly by means of the sin which he has instigated, which is its own punishment, and which contains in itself the germs of its own overwhelming retribution. This evil without us is called Satan—“The Satan”—the Enemy, as though there were no other.

iii. The power of this external force of evil is indicated by the fact that Satan is called by Saint Paul “The prince of the power of the air,”¹ and even by a very strong expression, “the god of this world.”² Our Lord said of him, “the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me.”³

iv. This foe of mankind is sometimes compared to a lion, sometimes to a serpent; he is compared to a wild beast very early in Scripture. God says to Cain (Genesis iv, 7), “And if thou doest not well, sin croucheth at the door”—like a tiger with fell claws and a glare in his hungry eye, ready at any unguarded instant to crawl out upon thee from the thicket where it lies hid, to trample thee into the mire to rend thee limb from limb. “Be sober,” says Saint

¹ Ephesians ii, 2.

² II. Corinthians iv, 4.

³ John xiv, 30, xvi, 11.

Peter, "be vigilant because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour."¹

v. But if the power of outward evil is compared to a lion because of its fearful, sudden, lashing spring, it is also compared to a serpent because it glides upon the unwary noiselessly, gradually, all but imperceptibly, as through the deciduous leaves of careless movements and wandering thoughts. Hence, too, the devil is called "that Old Serpent."² and we are warned lest we should be led astray by him, as the serpent seduced Eve.³

vi. Evil, then, either springs upon the human soul with sudden and overmastering violence or is suffered to slide into it by slow degrees. But of the two symbols that of the serpent was, on every ground and obviously, the best suited to convey the sacred teaching here. Fatal temptation cannot spring upon the innocent, "terrible and with a tiger's leap," until innocence has become incipient guilt. The wild beasts roar after their prey in thickets, where the serpent has already made its home.

vii. If we look still more closely at the emblem we see that it stands for that which occurs so incessantly in the later Jewish writings as the *Yetzer ha-ra*, or evil impulse. It symbolizes that lust of the flesh, called in Greek "the mind of the flesh," "which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affections, some the desire of the flesh":⁴ A nature which has once suffered itself to be infected by this corruption "is not subject to the law of God." It sinks into a state which Saint Paul describes as carnalism, as "the law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members."⁵

viii. The serpent is described as "more subtle than any beast of the field." This creature has always been regarded by the families of man as something uncanny alike in its loathliness, its fascination, and in the swift deathfulness of its attack and spring. It fascinates with full, round, glittering eye; it approaches noiseless and unseen; it crushes with its voluminous folds; it can glide over every fence and barrier, into every corner and recess. "It lies apparently dead for months, yet when roused it can outclimb the monkey, outswim the fish, outleap the zebra, outwrestle the athlete, and crush the tiger."⁶ The embodiment of temptation in the form of a serpent indicates the insidious power of inward evil. The writer introduces it with fearful suddenness, without giving a moment's thought to its shape, or position, or to any surprise which Eve might have been supposed to feel at hearing it emit human utterance. It never occurred to him to make Eve ask

"How cam'st thou speakable of mute?"

All this was entirely alien from his purpose. He is dealing with a symbol, which merely as a symbol is nothing to him; the serpent to him means the voice of revolt and seduction in the heart of man. Talking animals are universal in all the allegories of the world.

II. The serpent said to the woman, "Yea, hath God said . . . ?" This is an admirably idiomatic rendering of the abrupt *aphki?* And it is significant that the serpent only uses the more general name Elohim as though the sacred Tetragrammaton, the name of Yahveh the covenant God, be too "sacred and significant" to be put into those polluted lips.

i. How marvelous is the divine insight into the nature of sin, which is here displayed! There is nothing really sudden in the approach of the serpent. Its voice is only the voice of a doubt, already admitted into the soul of Eve, already tampered with by her wandering thought. It is the dawn of self-will; the first slight arrow-wound launched at that unquestioning obedience which rises from perfect faith in God—it is self-persuasion in the direction of desire. The serpent ought to have been hateful to Eve. "The burning color of the serpent; the

¹ I. Peter v, 8; compare Luke viii, 29, ix, 39-42.

² Proverbs xxiii, 32; Isaiah xxvii, 1; Revelation xii, 9-15, xx, 2.

³ As far back as Eusebius "the serpent" is regarded as a metaphor.

⁴ Ninth Article of the Church of England. See I. Peter ii, 11; II. Peter i, 4, ii, 10; James i, 14, 15; Romans vii, 7; Galatians v, 16, etc.

⁵ Romans vii, 23.

⁶ Dr. Marcus Dodds, "Genesis," p. 20.

cloven, vibrating tongue; the poison swollen teeth; the horrid hissing; the stealthy and tortuous but dart-like motions; the irascible temper; the contemptible craft"—all these would naturally make the creature an object of horror and disgust; but already for Eve the first stage of temptation is so far past that she has evidently permitted herself to feel "the bewitching power of the ever-watchful eyes." There is in her none of the start and shrinking back of innocence at the first touch of assuagement. The serpent does but articulate the voice of her own already inborn doubt. "Our great security against sin lies in being shocked at it. Eve gazed and reflected, when she should have fled."

ii. VERSES 2 AND 3. And although in words she repudiates the doubt, yet there is an accent of self-betraying exaggeration in the phrases she adopts. They might eat of the trees of the garden but—"alas"! she seems to sigh—there was one tree, and that in the very midst of the garden as though from its choiceness of preëminence, of which God had said, that they must not eat, neither must they touch it, lest they should die. God had not said that they were "not to touch it," and it is possible that the writer meant to imply a little impulse of rebellion in the over-emphasis with which the prohibition was repeated. Moreover, there was another tree in the midst of the garden, of which they had not been forbidden to eat, the Tree of Life; and she does not mention the name of the forbidden tree "of the knowledge of good and evil," because the very name would have sufficed to show that the object of the restriction was pure compassion. Perhaps, then, even already, the Yahvist means to shadow forth the lurking sophistry of sin, a certain selfishness of will, and infatuation of desire, and darkening of intellect. Eve felt already a certain possibility of and even indefinite attractiveness in independence and disobedience. "The history of the first sin," says Kalisch, "describes the nature of all human failings in every succeeding age. The simple narrative embodies truths which neither philosophy nor experience have been able to modify or to enlarge."

iii. The writer left much to human imagination and thought; otherwise he might have pointed out how infinitely wiser it would have been for Eve to keep away from the vicinage of temptation. If the fruit was forbidden, it was the worst of follies to linger in the scene of moral danger. We are all of us lingering near the fatal tree when we give willing harborage and hospitality to evil thoughts, and one of the lessons of this chapter is: Guard well thy thoughts, for thoughts are heard in Heaven. All wickedness of every kind begins, and only can begin, in evil thoughts. Then the evil thought becomes the evil wish; the evil wish the evil purpose; the evil purpose the evil act; the evil act the evil repetition—for, as Saint Augustine asks, "Whom sawest thou ever content with a single sin?" Then the evil act and the evil repetition disorder all the delicate moral adjustments of the soul, until the evil repetition has become the evil habit; the evil habit the evil character, and the evil character the evil destiny. "Sin," says Bishop Jeremy Taylor, "first startles a man; then it becomes pleasing; then it becomes easy; then delightful; then frequent; then habitual; then confirmed; then the man is impenitent, then obstinate, then resolves never to repent, and then is damned."

THE FALL (VERSES 4 TO 6).

VERSES 4 AND 5. But now the doubt or dislike of the prohibition, having been suffered secretly to enter the mind, is most fiercely emphasized into absolute disbelief and repudiation. The serpent voice, which is the voice of concupiscence within her, gives the lie to God, and says, "Ye shall not surely die; nay more, the prohibition is unjust, is tyrannous. It rises from God's envy at the possible attainment by man of an immense elevation. He knew that when they ate of the fruit their eyes should be opened; they would be no more like unintelligent driven animals; they would become as God, knowing good and evil."

VERSE 6. The results of the admitted doubt, of the secret rebellion, follow with immense and frightful rapidity. Now the woman gazes at the forbidden tree; persuades herself that its

fruit is good for food, and that it is pleasant to the eyes and a tree desirable for gaining insight. She tampers, she dallies with, she revels in the evil thought. Unwise curiosity becomes guilty curiosity, and guilty curiosity soon leaps full-grown into guilty assentation. Self-will is the high road to doubt of God's goodness; and that to rebellion, and that to ruin.

She took of the fruit—even then at that eleventh hour it might not have been too late to draw back, to leap away as it were from the edge of the precipice. But when the soul has gone so far in the path of guilt—when the senses and the self-will have conspired together for the betrayal—how rarely does it stop before the final consummation! There was no guilt in the existence of temptation; no guilt in the temperament which rendered it possible: the guilt began when the will began to side with the impulse and instigation against the reason and the conscience. “It is the devil's part to suggest,” says Saint Bernard. “It is ours not to consent: As often as we overcome him so we bring glory to God . . . who opposeth us that we may contend, and assisteth us that we may conquer.”

“She ate.” The evil curiosity developed with terrible precipitance into the daringly open transgression; and since no lightning flashed, no overwhelming ruin burst instantly upon the head of crime—since, on the contrary, the tasting of the forbidden fruit brought at once its own voluptuous gratification,

“Greedily she engorged without restraint,
And knew not eating death.”

And so the mother of mankind, by her fatal inabstinence,

“Brought death into the world and all our woe.”

And, alas, it does not stop there! The tempted instantly becomes in her turn the tempter. Those who have yielded to the devil become not only his personal bondslaves, but too often his active agents and emissaries. Sin is a frightfully pervasive and diffusive element in the heart itself; it multiplies itself with infinite reverberations in the world without. By committing a conscious act of sin—by first willingly taking sin by the hand—the soul joins the great host of rebels against God, and recommitts the crime of our first parents. But a lonely participation in the abysmal mystery of rebellion terrifies the soul. It cannot bear isolation in evil. The first intoxicating result of tasting the fruit of sin is the desire to share with others the maddening empoisonment; so “the woman gave also to her husband with her; and he did eat.” Of what kind the tree was is a question which it never troubled the sacred writer to inquire. Tradition has generally been content, as were the Latin Fathers and Milton, with the notion of

“That crude apple which perverted Eve”;

but the Rabbis thought that the tree was a vine or an olive; and the Greeks imagined that it was a fig. It was none of these; it was a pure symbol on the page of a writer who did not expect that his readers would wander from his high and solemn purpose into the inquiries of a literalism which would be perfectly futile.

The consequences. (Genesis iii, 7-20.)

Shame, verse 7. And now that they had sinned “their eyes were opened,” and fatally opened. The first result of sin in the soul not wholly lost is the penal agony of shame—the rankling tooth of remorse. They were ashamed of one another and of themselves: “they knew that they were naked.”

Their previous happy condition of unconscious simplicity is succeeded by one of anxiety (ii, 25). The native hue of innocence is exchanged for the burning and painful blush of self-reproach and self-disgust.

That shame was too intolerable to bear. To shield themselves in part from it at least by some poor resource, they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves girdles to hide the

nakedness which now only shocked and pained them. And from this it is evident that, though it may be an error to press the signification into details, the thought of some form of sensual sin is prominent, if not exclusive, in the sacred narrative. And since no undying worm and quenchless flame can cause fiercer pangs than those which the shame of the self-conscious sinner burns into himself, sin becomes, sooner or later — and far more often soon than late — its own inevitable punishment. Every sinner, however wildly he may try to escape his doom, becomes his own most certain self-tormentor and self-avenger. He sees virtue and goodness in their own native loveliness and pines away at their loss. He is his own hell, and himself arms all that is best within him with the snaky torch and serpent tresses of the fury avenger. These results also are clearly indicated in the ensuing verses.

Alienation from God. (Genesis iii, 8 to 11.)

This second consequence of disobedience, so certain and so full of anguish, is indicated in a most simple yet vivid manner, such as could not be surpassed. Hitherto the Adam had lived in familiar intercourse with God.

“Upon the breast of new-created earth
Man walked; and when and wheresoe’er he moved,
Alone or mated, solitude was not.
He heard, borne on the wind, the articulate voice
Of God; and angels to his sight appeared,
Crowning the glorious hills of paradise;
Or through the groves, gliding like morning mist
Enkindled by the sun. He sat — and talked
With winged messengers; who daily brought
To his small island in the ethereal deep
Tidings of joy and love.”¹

At first a loving son exulted in his father’s presence; now a stained, self-conscious, guilty wretch shrank from it. The presence of the pure does but pain the unclean, as light gives anguish to aching eyes.

The Lord God walked in the Garden in the cool wind of the day, and man heard his sounding footstep.² Man came forth no more to meet him. Adam and his wife hid themselves — oh, how vainly — amid the trees of the Garden.

But the soul, however much it tries, can never hide itself from God. It finds God a besetting God. It cannot find a spot unvisited, unhaunted by his omnipresence. “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.”

Adam instantly trembled to hear the terrible, penetrating, still, small summons of God; his sounding footstep in the Garden; his heart-shaking question, “Adam, where art thou?”

With that imperfect girdle of fig leaves about him — never before needed — which betrayed his sin and shame, he came forth and confessed his concealment, his fear, his consciousness of nakedness. And God’s voice, which was the voice of his own conscience within him, asked, “Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the forbidden tree?”

Guilt is always weakness, and meanness, and uneasy cowardice, and the fertility of poor excuse. Adam is not content humbly to confess, and to throw himself on the mercy of God. He would fain screen himself and throw the blame on others — even, in part, on God himself.³ “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.”

¹ Wordsworth, “The Excursion,” Book IV.

² *Kól*, “sound,” as in II. Samuel v, 24; I. Kings xix, 12; Spurrell.

³ James i, 13 (Revised Version). “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man.”

Now God turns to the shrinking woman with the awful question — the more awful from its very simplicity — “*What is this that thou hast done?*” How tremendous beyond all power of imagination would have been the true and full answer to that question, if Eve could but have foreseen all that her sin involved!

And the woman can but throw the blame on the source of the temptation: “*The Serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.*”

But human beings cannot find any valid excuse for their misdeeds by attempting to shift the responsibility of them upon the external sources of evil. Any outward temptation does not become sin at all, until it has been treacherously admitted and voluntarily welcomed into the heart. “The soul,” as an old divine has said, “may not make a pack-saddle of the devil for its own sins.” As far as man is concerned the serpent is harmless enough, until man has unbarred the temple gate, and suffered it to glide into the sanctuary. It is there only that its subtle venom begins to permeate every vein and fiber of the moral life. And thus, as God had said to Adam and Eve, the wages of sin was death — that spiritual death which was a far more real death than what sweet St. Francis of Assisi called “our sister, the death of the body.” Sin is death; for it is “an attempt to control the immutable and unalterable laws of everlasting righteousness, goodness, and truth on which the universe depends.” “The wages that sin bargains with the sinner for,” says South, “are life, pleasure, and profit: but the wages it pays him with are death, torment, and destruction: he that would understand the falsehood and deceit of sin thoroughly, must compare its promises and its payment together.” The experience of our first parents did but anticipate the experience of the universal world in all subsequent generations — that “unlawful pleasure is envenomed pleasure; its fruition is disappointing at the time, its consequences cruelly torture afterward, its effects deprave forever.”

The Curse of the Serpent. (Verses 14 and 15.)

In these verses, in which the allegory and fact are somewhat perplexingly commingled, there seems to be an interfusion of the symbol and the thing signified—the serpent and the power of evil which stood behind it, and of which it was the emblem and the instrument. That the serpent is here a symbol of the Evil One none have doubted. We find this clearly stated in the New Testament. Thus in John viii, 44, our Lord says that the devil was “a liar” and “a murderer from the beginning,” and we read of “that old serpent called the devil,” in Revelation xii, 9, xx, 2. But the identification was made long before the era of the New Covenant. Even the ancient Samaritan text of the Pentateuch here renders “*serpent*” by “*liar*.” And in the Book of Wisdom we read “For God has created man for unperishable existence, and made him after the image of his own being. But by the envy of Satan death came into the world; and it befalls all those who belong to him.”¹

On the serpent, then, is pronounced a fourfold curse, which is perhaps based on the imaginative aspect of the creature’s actual lot. It is to be (1) cursed among all cattle, and every beast of the field — a thing set apart, as it were, to be shunned and hated; (2) it is to crawl on its belly as a perpetual degradation; (3) it is to eat dust, because, from its method of salivation and deglutition, dust must be largely mingled with its food. “Dust,” says Isaiah, “shall be the serpent’s meat.” (4) There was to be perpetual enmity between it and man. It might “crush” or wound man’s heel, but man — always regarding it with fear and horror, even when these feelings are disguised, as among the Egyptians, and Hindoos, and North American Indians, under forms of superstitious reverence — should, on every possible occasion, bruise its head.

These curses may be, as regards the mere reptile, a play of imagination, since, like all the rest of God’s creatures, serpents do but fulfill the inevitable law of their being. To this day, for instance in Hindostan, man crushes the heads of countless serpents, and more Hindoos die

¹ Wisdom ii, 23-24; Micah vii, 17; Isaiah lxxv, 25.

every year from snake bite, especially in the heel, than from any other accident. Probably, too, some very ancient tradition on this subject survived among different races, for to this day the pictures of Vishnu as Krishna, the young Hindoo god of deliverance, trampling victoriously on the serpent which he has destroyed, might serve as a pictorial illustration of the same idea which is in the mind of the Yahvist.¹ It would, of course, be absurd to suppose that every serpent, of every species and variety — numbered by hundreds — lives in a state of conscious degradation and anguish because the Power of Evil used the agency of their distant progenitor for the first temptation. We must, therefore, look through the symbolism to deeper truths. The curse on the serpent represents the inherent shamefulness which attaches itself like a law to all corrupt and evil natures. Of every drunkard, and sensualist, and murderer, and thief, and liar, and mammon worshiper, it remains true that “on thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.”

In the words, “Thou shalt bruise his heel,” and he “shall bruise thy head,” many Fathers and Christian commentators, and some later Jewish writers have seen a Messianic interpretation apart from the more general one. And this view is distinctly sanctioned by Saint Paul, and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who alludes to the curse of the serpent in speaking of Christ as “The seed of the woman,” sent forth by God “to destroy, by his death, him that hath power of death, that is, the devil” (Galatians iii, 16; Hebrews ii, 14). Saint Paul says, “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet” (Romans xvi, 20). It is perfectly legitimate to read this interpretation into the old deep symbol and prophecy, without assuming that it was consciously in the mind of the writer. For the completion of its work involved the potency of the final annihilation of all evil; the destruction of every venomous force of sin was declared in this last great cry upon the cross, “It is finished.” The curse-alleviating promise of Eden did not receive its full illustration until the “Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.”

The Doom of the Woman. (Verse 16.)

“Unto the woman he said.” On this expression Tertullian makes the striking comment, “God shows that, for the present, he extended Adam’s life. Therefore, *he did not curse* Adam himself and Eve, as having been unveiled by confession, as candidates for restitution.”²

Woman, as the author of the calamity, is to taste of its bitter fruit in herself, and in all her daughters, who sin after the similitude of her transgression; God pronounced upon her the doom of pain, perilous childbirth,³ of desire for and subjection to her husband, so that in the very fulfillment of the highest and sweetest ideals of her life — in love and motherhood — was attached the condition of physical and often also of mental anguish. This doom was, however, greatly alleviated by the coming of Christ. Yet throughout the East, and in many ages and climes, the lot of woman, under this inherent curse involved in the primeval Fall, has been one of drudgery and degradation, and even in many nominally Christian countries it is so still.

The Doom of Man. (Verses 17 to 19.)

“And unto Adam he said.” It is noticeable that Adam here first occurs as a proper noun — Adam, not the Adam. The man also must bear his retribution. His excuse which he shifted upon his wife was not valid. Man may be tempted to sin, but

’Tis one thing to be tempted, another thing “to fall.”

Every man is solely responsible for his own transgression and “the soul that sinneth it shall die.” Therefore, to punish man’s offense: i. The ground is cursed, and shall bring forth thorns and thistles. ii. He should eat the produce of it, but only as the result of toil, and

¹ It should, however, be noticed that the history of Krishna in the “*Bhagavad-gîtâ*,” may have been influenced by Jewish or Christian elements, as the Koran was afterward.

² Tertullian, “*Adversus Marcionem*,” ii, 25.

³ “Multiplying, I will multiply thy pain and thy conception.”

labor, and the sweat of his brow. iii. And thus his life would be a life of pain, for he was not a god, and had not become as Elohim by his sin; dust he was and unto dust should he return. The reality of the curse has been acknowledged by all mankind.

“Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust,” says Job, “neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward”;¹ and he asks, “Are not his days like the days of a hireling?”² “God distributeth sorrows in his anger.”³ “All his [man’s] days are sorrows,” says the preacher, “and his travail grief.”⁴

“All the life of man is painful,” says Euripides, “and there is no cessation from his toils.”⁵ The sage promised the unhappy Persian king that he would recall his dead queen to life, if he could find the names of but three happy men to inscribe upon her tomb: and he searched through all his realm, but they were not to be found.”

The Psalmist sums up the peevish April day of our little life thus: “The days of our age are threescore years and ten; and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labor and sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.”

Man and Woman. (Verse 20.)

Hitherto the Adam has called the name of woman *ishshāh*; but now God had spoken of her conception and motherhood and he calls her name *chavvah* “Life” or “Living,” because she is to be the mother of all living. The curse of participated guilt is in part ameliorated, through God’s tenderness, by the blessing of closer union; and the beautiful sanctity of married love, with all the sweetness of family life, renders all sorrows more endurable, all joys more intense.

Against the deadly evil of polygamy, so universal in Eastern lands, Christ appealed to the primeval monogamy of Eden, to prove that “in the beginning it was not so,” though plurality of wives had been permitted in the Mosaic dispensation because of the hardness of men’s hearts. He restored the beauty of the ideal of paradise to its pristine brightness, and whenever religion has remained unsophisticated by the priestly and Manichean elements of voluntary will worship and unnatural asceticism, “forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats,” then men have revered that holy estate which was instituted in the time of man’s innocency, and which Christ adorned and beautified with his Presence and first miracle which he wrought in Cana of Galilee.

The end of the Sin.

God who always tempers judgment with mercy, and whose compassion ever prevails over his justice, alleviates in many ways the punishment which the sinful parents of our race had brought upon themselves. Vainly had they attempted to hide the shame of their nakedness; but God made them coats of skins.⁶ “The Law begins and ends with an act of loving kindness,” said Rav Simlaee. “At its commencement God clothes the naked: at its close he buries the dead.” (Soteh, 14a.) To ask where the skins came from, is to go behind the writer’s purpose. It might be sufficient to say that, as geology has overwhelmingly proved, death has existed in the animal world since the earliest dawn of time, and the first pair might have been clad in the skin of dead animals. It is equally easy to interpolate a supposed institution of animal sacrifice and to say that these were the skins of animals slain in propitiation of God’s wrath. But such conjectures are either futile or unwarrantable. Scripture nowhere tells us of any divine institution of sacrifice as an ordinance of worship before the Mosaic legislation. Equally easy is it, and even more futile, to follow some of the Rabbis and Fathers in interpreting the “tunics of skin” as Adam’s own skin, his fleshy garment and tabernacle; and to assume that, up to this time, his body had been a body of light like that of the angels. These are the inexcusable aberrations of a fantastic exegesis, which has done much to render turbid with alien influences of human folly the pure and simple Word of God.

¹ Job v, 7.

² Job vii, 1.

³ Job xxi, 17.

⁴ Ecclesiastes ii, 23.

⁵ Hippolytus, 189.

⁶ Genesis iii, 21. “Coats,” Hebrew, *Kotnoth* (compare “cotton”).

In the next verse (verse 22) it is admitted that, infinite as had been the *loss* involved for man in the forfeiture of his innocence, yet, on the other hand, in some respects, his intellectual horizon had been broadened: he had attained a fuller self-consciousness, and made a disastrous progress. "*The man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.*" Now, therefore, he must be suffered no longer to eat of the tree of life. The possibility of earthly immortality is forfeited. He is sent forth from Eden to till the common earth; and "Eastward" of the Garden, that all access to it might be barred to him thenceforth forever, are placed Cherubim and a fiery sword that turned every way to guard the way of the tree of life.

It is a curious circumstance that the Cherubim are here abruptly introduced without the slightest explanation or indication as to what they were. We may form some opinion about them from (i) the etymology of the word, and (ii) from various ethnic analogies; but (iii) mainly from the references to them in Scripture.

i. The etymology is wholly uncertain. The word may be connected (1) with *kerabh*, "he ploughed"; or (2) a transposition of *rekoobh*, "chariot" (I. Chronicles xxviii, 18); or (3) *q'roubh*, "he who is near God"; or (4) from Arab roots meaning "strong" or "noble"; or (5) the Assyrian *karabu*, "to be powerful."¹

ii. The ethnic analogies are numerous. There is the winged *saraph* of the Egyptians, seen on their sacred arks; and winged figures of lions, and bulls with human faces, or of men with eagle heads in Assyrian and Babylonian remains.

iii. The Cherubim are here alone mentioned in Genesis, and are introduced as angelic beings who defend the tree of life. We next meet with them in Exodus xxv, 18, xxxvii, 7, where they form the throne of the Shekinah over the Ark which enshrines the broken tablets of the moral law. There they are guardians of his presence for the expiation of sin, and guardians of the divine oracles. "In the vision of Ezekiel" known as "the chariot" (Ezekiel i, 4-28), and in the Apocalypse (iv, 6-11) we have variations between one single tetramorphic being and the "fourfold visaged four." Though in symbolic completeness they are composed of four separate or united forms of life, yet they might be represented by any one of the four elements, especially by winged oxen or winged men.

They clearly symbolize divine existence in immediate contact with the Eternal: "As standing on the highest step of created life, and uniting in themselves the most perfect created life, they are the most perfect emblem of God and the divine life."² Their office was twofold: (1) They exercised a protective-vengeful function in guarding from man's too-close intrusion the physical and moral splendors of a lost paradise, and a sacred revelation; and (2) they form the chariot throne of God, and defend the outskirts of his unapproachable glory. But, in their connection with the mercy seat, they are types, not only of vengeance, but of expiation and forgiveness. And in the vision of Saint John these immortalities appear in the same choir, the redeemed innumerable multitude of the Universal Church, mingling with the choir and joining in the new song. Thus we see that the apparent wrath which excluded man from the forfeited paradise was but the mercy in disguise which secured for him its final fruition in nobler forms of life. The four in their union were also fancifully regarded as a type of Christ.

No more suggestive commentary on the whole narrative of the Fall can be offered than that of the Apostle of the Gentiles: "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."³

¹ See my article on Cherubim in Kitto's "Encyclopædia"; Cheyne in "Encyclopædia Britannica"; Spurrell, *ad locum*.

² Baehr, "Symbolik," i, 340.

³ I. Corinthians xv, 45-49.

CHAPTER IV.

(GENESIS IV.)

THE SPREAD OF SIN AND THE FIRST MURDER.

(VERSES 1 TO 15.)

THE story of man's fall continues to acquire a more and more tragic intensity, and, while the story of humanity tells us of splendid progress in all the arts of life, it tells us also of the brutal passions which have flung their sanguinary stains over the annals of advancing civilization.

There has been an attempt, in the legends of all nations, to evoke the shadows out of an unknown past. In all attempts to imagine and reproduce the story of prehistoric aeons the conjectures of thinkers as to the first beginnings of civilization and of crime have been thrown into allegoric forms. But the sacred writer does not lose himself in the accumulated details of other ancient cosmogonies. He leaves unsolved many of the stubborn questionings of curiosity. He suffers his narrative to be beset with countless difficulties as to all the points which do not bear on his main design. He is too much absorbed in his ethical and spiritual purpose to pay the smallest heed to matters which did not bear upon it. He unswervingly pursues the end which he has solely in view—namely, the revelation to men of truths of infinite concernment to their spiritual instruction.

From the expression: "And Adam knew his wife Eve," which is here first introduced after the fall, many have conjectured that but for the fall there would never have been this union of the sexes, but that mankind would have been reproduced in other ways. There is not the least justification for such an opinion. It is a point on which the sacred writers do not touch; and, so far as the mere phrase is concerned, it does not involve the inference that this was the beginning of marital intercourse.¹ To the Jews the mysteries of marriage and of birth were regarded as having been primevally sanctified, in accordance with the earliest decree of God. They would not have sanctioned the false notion of a presumptuous asceticism that they involved any dishonor or any stain.

So Eve brought forth her firstborn son, and in the rapturous joy of motherhood called him Cain (*Qaîn*) for, she said, "I have acquired a man from the Lord."² It is indeed certain that *Qaîn* cannot be derived from *qānah*, "to acquire"; but the connection of the two words is not that of direct affinity, but of mysterious assonance. We have already seen that the Jews attributed mysterious meanings to the sound—so to speak, the physiological quality—of words. To them they were something more than mere breaths of articulated air. The writer must have been well aware that *Qaîn* has no direct affinity with *qānah*, but is connected with *qyn* "to forge"; and that the most obvious meaning of the name Cain is not "*acquisition*," but "a spear."³ The Jews were, indeed, fond of connecting the names of men with some prominent event in their lives, as in the cases of Saul and Samuel; and names were often given at birth, or altered in subsequent life, with significant allusion to an important circumstance in the career or character. In some of these instances, however, the name was only a suggestive resemblance. Thus Moses cannot be derived from *māshāh*, "*to draw out*."⁴ But in these early chapters of Genesis we are obviously dealing rather with general and allegorical appellatives than with specific designations. We see thus, for instance, in the name of Eve's second son, Abel, which

¹ In proof of this see I. Samuel i, 19.

² The Hebrew is *eth Yahuveh*.

³ II. Samuel xxi, 16. Also the name of the Kenites, Numbers xxiv, 22; Judges iv, 11. A similar word in Arabic means "a smith."

⁴ Exodus ii, 10. See Josephus, 'Antiquities,' II, 9, 6.

is not connected as Josephus thought with *iebel*, "grief," but with *hebel*, "frailty" or "nothingness," with obvious reference to the shortness of his life.

The two men first born into the world, naturally betook themselves to the two most necessary and elementary modes of supporting life — the agricultural and the pastoral. Abel was a keeper of sheep; Cain was a tiller of the ground. These were the almost exclusive pursuits of the ancient Israelites.

The next immense step in human development was the dawn of that religious feeling which, in almost every primitive nation, has expressed itself by the offering of sacrifice. It is a fact deeply significant of the sobriety and wholesomeness of this vivid narrative that there is no reference to any divine injunction of the ordinances of sacrifice. Nor, again, is there the least hint that the sacrifices of Cain and Abel had any propitiatory significance. In savage nations, self-torture and the immolation not only of animal but even of human victims, to appease the jealous fury of demon-deities, have been common.

The natural mind of fallen man, stained with guilt and terrified by conscience, felt instinctively driven to the question which the Prophet Micah puts into the mouth of the Mesopotamian sorcerer: "Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" This was the error which Samuel had to correct in the crude and impulsive mind of Saul — "Hath the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." It was the lesson of the Prophet Hosea which won the favorite quotation of our Lord, "Behold, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." It required a special revelation to teach man the solemn and beautiful truth, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." The writer gives no indication that he shared the manifold aberration of the old religions. The sacrifices of which he speaks are simple expressions of thanks and of praise. He does not even hint that they were placed on any altar. No altar is so much as mentioned till the days of Noah, after the flood.

In course of time Cain brought to God an offering. The word used is *minchah*. It was the sign of instinctive gratitude to the Giver of all good gifts, and it was not a *zebach* or *olah*, i. e., a bloody sacrifice, but consisted of the fruits of the ground which had been yielded as increase in reward for his toil. Abel, since he was a shepherd, no less naturally brought "fat pieces" of the first fruits of his flock.

It might have seemed to human eyes that there was no difference between the brothers; that, in the absence of any divine injunction, each had acted rightfully and dutifully in bringing the offering which was most natural to him, and which expressed his thanksgiving for God's blessing upon his labors. But the Lord readeth the very thoughts of the heart, and "Yahveh had regard for Abel and for his offering, but for Cain and for his offering he had no regard."

Two questions arise which have been freely answered by exegetes from the earliest days, but to which the sacred narrative furnishes no answer at all.

i. "How did God show that he approved and accepted the offering of Abel, but did not approve that of Cain?"

The writer did not trouble himself with such questions. He was content to express the essential fact. Any conjecture must, from the nature of the case, be idle. Theodotion renders the word "had respect for" by the Greek word that means "kindled by fire," and that God's approval of Abel was shown by the descent of fire from heaven upon his offering,¹ has been the view of many commentators both Jewish and Christian, from the days of Saint Jerome down to those of Delitzsch. Yet there is no hint of any such miracle, and God's approval

¹ As in Leviticus ix, 24; Judges vi, 21; I. Kings xviii, 38; I. Chronicles xxi, 26.

might have been known by the same subjective intimation in which he subsequently made known to Cain his warning, and the doom which must ever dog the heels of crime.

ii. Much more important is the question, "Why did Jehovah respect Abel's gift, while he rejected Cain's?" Again the brief, solemn record is silent, because the special reason had no significance apart from the general one, that God looks not at the gift, but at the heart of the giver.

a. The reasons suggested by the Fathers and some later writers are untenable. There is, for instance, no hint that God accepted animal sacrifices, and despised the offering of fruits. The wiser heathen themselves would have rejected any such notion. The difference lay in the giver, not in the gift. Even the gay lyric poet assures the rustic that the gift of the innocent is always acceptable to heaven. Euripides says that "a wicked hand could not even touch the gods."¹ The Rabbis were no less emphatic in asserting this truth, and referred to Psalm li, 17. Rabbi Eleazar said: "Greater is he that doeth righteousness than all the sacrifices."

b. Nor, again, is any emphasis to be laid on the fact that Abel brought of the *firstlings* of his flock and of their fat, as though it were meant — so the Talmudists suggest — that Cain's gift was careless and perfunctory, and he himself like a faithless steward who only offers to his master what is second-best. Had such been the intention of the story, it is clear that it would have been more definitely expressed, and I cannot think that it is proved by the Greek word of Hebrews xi, 4, which, literally rendered, would be a "more abundant" sacrifice; for the writer of the epistle may have borrowed the notion from Philo, as he also does the expression that Abel, though dead, still lives.

c. Still more arbitrary and less warrantable is the view of Hofmann, that Cain deliberately overlooked the connection of sacrifice with sin, as though he were already acquainted with the truth that, in the Levitic law, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission"² — an inference accompanied with the very idle suggestion that because the ground had been "cursed," therefore the fruits of the earth were an accursed offering.

d. The *essential* difference between Cain's gift and that of Abel had been already indicated by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. "By faith," he says, "Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which [sacrifice] he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect to his gift; and through it [faith] he being dead yet speaketh." (Revised Version.)

e. And this lesson is distinctly indicated in the subsequent narrative, which, without further specification, intimates that what was lacking in Cain was perfect love and purity of heart. The absence of this love and purity of heart instantly betrayed itself in the consequences. Seeing that Abel was more approved than himself, "it was hot to Cain" — *i. e.*, his anger and jealousy burned like fire, and his countenance fell. The existence of this bad and fierce passion gave occasion to a merciful warning from God. Speaking to his heart, and conveying to him the lesson, that the worst way of receiving a mark of God's disapproval is to vent spite on our brother-man, because of it, the Lord said to Cain, "Why art thou angry, and why is thy countenance fallen?" The appeal was very gentle and merciful, because Cain had followed a right impulse in his thank offering and his Creator would fain wean him back from the path that leads to death. So Jehovah makes known to the offender the secret plague of his own heart by the question, "If thou doest well, is there not uplifting of thy [fallen] countenance? And if thou doest not well, sin croucheth at the door: and towards thee is its desire, but thou oughtest to rule over it."

This is a very memorable passage. It shows that "the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight."³ It also conveys a striking

¹ Euripides, Ion, 1315.

² Hebrews ix, 22.

³ Proverbs xv, 8, xxi, 27. Compare Isaiah xxix, 13-14; Matthew xv, 8-9.

admonition, and has been needlessly misunderstood from very early days. To give to the word *chattath* here the meaning of “a sin offering”—a propitiatory victim which thou mayest sacrifice—is a willful distortion, and an essential degradation of the passage, and it also thrusts into the sacred story a gross anachronism. For sin-offerings were not appointed till centuries afterward; and all such offerings are worse than vain, unless the sin of the heart be removed by true repentance. The feminine word *chattath* is, indeed, in apposition with a masculine verb, and masculine pronouns; and evidently there was, even in ancient times, much uncertainty about the rendering, and, perhaps, as to the reading also. But the grammatical anomaly is accounted for, since *chattath* is only a feminine symbol of a masculine object.¹ So that, “Sin being personified is viewed as masculine.”

The probable meaning is that sin like a wild beast—like a lion, of which one of the Arabic names is “the liar in wait”—hurks crouching at the door of life; that its desire is to spring upon and rend and devour the soul; but that it can and ought to be subdued by “a firm will, the servant of a tender conscience.” What words could be more pregnant with wise significance? They indicate the most essential truths which must ever be borne in mind by the sons of a race that God made able to stand yet free to fall—the facts had already been shadowed forth in the story of the fall of our first parents—namely, (1) that temptation is ever on the watch to destroy them; (2) that their “adversary, the devil, like a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour”; (3) that to succumb to the allurements of evil is to be ruined by its inherent and necessary consequences; (4) that there are two factors in temptation, the inward and the outward, the opportunity and the concupiscence; (5) that even in the combination of both, while there is great peril, there is as yet no sin; (6) that the treacherous self within us is ever ready to betray us to the combined solicitation of desire and the possibility of gratifying it; (7) that reason and conscience, like two great Archangels of God, are ever by our side to stimulate us to resistance, and to strengthen us to resist effectually; (8) that all our passions and the whole domain of our lower and animal nature should be placed under the moral sway of a strong and uncontaminated will. These truths are here illustrated under another form. “Unto thee is the desire of Sin,” the innate impulse, the concupiscence, the sensuality, the affection, the desire of the flesh. “The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the vain glory of life,” are ever tempting us and drawing us aside from the path of life to the paths of death—“but thou shalt rule over this evil desire; thou oughtest, and thou canst.”

But the warning—so gentle and so merciful—was in vain. Cain brooded over the gloomy seductions of wrath, envy, hatred, jealousy, malice, in all their murderous instigations which sprang from offended pride and wounded self-love. “And Cain spoke to his brother Abel”—it is very possible that by a clerical error a clause has here dropped out, and that the reading should be, “And Cain said to Abel, Let us go into the field.” “And when they were in the field Cain rose against Abel his brother, and slew him.” No detail, no description, no hint as to the weapon or manner of death, is given. The fact is left in all its ghastly simplicity—the firstborn man was the first murderer, and the first human death which defaced the image of God on “the human face divine” was the death of his brother, the murdered victim. Thus the first death in the world was a murder, and sin became its own willful executioner.

The *cause* of the foul murder is sufficiently intimated even in the intense concentration of the narrative. It is needless to add to it the Rabbinic conjectures, that it was due to envy of Abel’s wife, or to difference of religious view. Both of these causes have, indeed, deluged the world with blood. A woman, as Horace said, has many a time become a deadly cause of war; and because of the opinionated arrogance which, persuaded of its own necessary infallibility, has not sufficient charity to forgive a difference of opinion, tens of thousands of men and women, and innocent boys and girls, have been burnt and murdered by priestly butchers and inquisitors

¹This view is admitted by the best Hebrew grammarians, Ewald, Gesenius, Kalisch, etc.

in Italy, and in Spain, and in Mexico, and the voice of their agony, and of their blood, shed in rivers, still incarnadines the multitudinous seas, and cries to God for vengeance from the fields and cities of the Netherlands. But there is no hint here as to religious divergences. It is, however, interesting to note that one Talmudic story attributes the murder to "lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain." It says that while Cain was plowing Abel crossed the field with his flocks, and Cain angrily asked, "Why do you let your flocks feed on land which belongs to me?" Abel answered, "You eat of their flesh, and clothe yourself with their wool." Cain answered, "You are in my power; who would avenge your death if I slew you?" "God," answered Abel, "who will surely punish you even for those evil words." Then Cain in wrath struck Abel with his spade and killed him, and then in remorse dug a hole and buried him. And immediately afterward the Eternal appeared to Cain, and asked, "Where is Abel, thy brother?"¹

There is a dreadful affinity between all classes of sin, but it suffices us to say with Saint John, "This is the message which ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another: not as Cain, who was of the Evil One, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous."²

Saint John, then, thinks with the Yahvist that jealousy, envy, pique, and a deep-seated hatred of goodness, were a sufficient motive; and an English statesman has said, "Pique is one of the strongest motives in the human mind. Fear is strong but transient. Interest is more lasting but weaker: I will ever back pique against them both. It is the spur the devil rides the noblest temper with."³

No sooner was the deed done than conscience awoke in all its gorgon terrors. It is ever so. There is a power of ghastly inward illumination in the commission of a great crime. In the Koran we read that after the murder God sent a crow to scratch in the earth, and show him how he might hide his brother's shame. And in the morning "he was of those who repent."

It lights up the theater of the guilty conscience with a fierce unnatural glare, which makes the sinner see the heinousness of sin as it really is, and as it appeared to his own innocence, before he subjected reason and conscience to the glamour of temptation, and suffered them to be enchained by the siren's song. The gratification afforded by the crime instantly seems to have been but infinitesimal when it is seen in its reality, and when the deadly glamour of temptation no longer conceals its native ugliness. But then it is too late: the die is cast, the deed is done, and is as irrevocable as the shot arrow, as the spoken word.

The sin finds out the murderer at once. He hears the dread voice within him, which he knows to be the voice of God, asking, "Where is Abel, thy brother?" But he will not at once come before the accusing witness which is dragging down his life. He says, with the vain subterfuge of lies, "I know not," and adds with that brazen insolence of selfishness which his parents had not shown in their transgression, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

But conscience—God's primitive vicegerent within us, a monarch in its peremptoriness, and a prophet in its information, a priest in its sanctions and anathemas—vouchsafes no answer to lies which do not even deceive the liar. God does not deign to heed the effrontery which, in the assertion of absolute self-concentrated selfishness, denies all duty toward, and all concern for, its brother-man. The only answer he gives is again the throbbing thunder of the question, "What hast thou done? Hark! thy brother's blood-drops cry to me from the ground."⁴ Judgment is often belated; the sentence is often passed, yet the doom delayed. But this lingering of punishment is far rarer in the case of murder than of any other crime, and in this instance the doom trod close on the heels of the dementation. The punishment, which had not

¹ Targum of Jonathan, *ad loc.*

² I. John iii, 11, 12. Compare Hebrews xi, 4; Jude 11.

³ Dodds, "Genesis," p. 33.

⁴ Literally, "bloods"—*i. e.*, "blood violently shed."

in this instance walked with leaden or with wool-shod feet, struck at once with iron hand. "And now thou art cursed from the ground¹ which hath opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand." Thou shalt till it with vainer and less rewarded toil; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be upon the earth. Truly the blood of Jesus "speaketh better things than that of Abel!"²

Punishment is never arbitrary or accidental. It is the natural result and consequence of the sin itself. It is the sin itself in other forms; so that sin, as it is the surest, is also the deadliest punishment of sin. It is the characteristic of murder to exhaust itself in vain efforts; to be cursed with innate restlessness; to be haunted; to hear footsteps behind it; to find the earth made of glass; to be terrified at the sound of a shaken leaf; to be a fugitive and a vagabond upon the earth.

But Cain was as yet not penitent, whatever, by God's infinite compassion, he may have become thereafter. He complains of his punishment as excessive. His penalty is, he says, "greater than bearing." This might mean "my sin is too great for forgiveness"; but in accordance with the context it seems to mean "greater than I can bear." It is as though Cain pleaded, "What! one instant's passion, and a *life-long* curse?" At the moment there was no one to shed the blood of him by whose hand man's blood had been shed. But immediate death would have been for Cain the least and lightest of punishments.

Extended days were for Cain only a lengthening out and increase of punishment. How could he live any longer in God's presence? He must hide himself and be a miserable fugitive and vagabond; and when men increased in number his hand would be against every man, and every man's hand against him, and everyone who found him would slay him. The writer does not explain the "everyone," though no other human being is mentioned till the birth of Seth, who is regarded as a substitute for Abel. Legend gives to Adam and Eve thirty-three sons and twenty-seven daughters.

From physical vengeance it was necessary that Cain should be saved. Sevenfold retribution would fall on the man who murdered the murderer.³ His punishment was in the hand of God. "And Yahveh gave [or appointed] Cain a sign lest anyone finding him should kill him."⁴

What was this "sign" which was half a protector and half a branding curse? The narrative preserves its stern and awful reticence so that all conjecture must be in vain. Yet we cannot be wrong in following the merest inference that, as in the case of other murderers, there was thereafter an agony and a horror on the countenance of Cain which marked him out from other men. Men might read strange matters on his face. The passions leave on human countenances their furrows and their scathe; and Milton wrote with his usual deep moral insight when he makes the cherub, severe in youthful beauty, say to him who was a murderer from the beginning:

"Think not, revolted spirit, thy shape the same,
Or undiminished brightness to be known,
As when thou stood'st in heaven upright and pure;
That glory then, when thou no more wast good,
Departed from thee, and thou resemblest now
Thy sin and place of doom obscure and foul."⁵

¹ Hebrew *adhamah*, that is, "the curse shall come on thee from the stubborn and barren earth." So Abn Ezra, Kimchi, etc. ² Hebrews xii, 24.

³ "In seven generations Lamech will slay Cain." Rabb. "Commentary on Genesis," p. 36.

⁴ Literally, "a sign for Cain." The sign was given in mercy and in answer to his request.

⁵ "Paradise Lost," iv, 835-839.

THE DAWN OF CIVILIZATION.

(VERSES 16 TO 24.)

The fragmentary nature and purely moral significance of the narrative are nowhere more distinctly marked than in the fact that scarcely an indication is given of the rapid multiplication of mankind. The very next verse (16) tells us that Cain — like Satan in the Book of Job — “went from the presence of Yahveh, and dwelt in the land of Nod, in the East (?) of Eden.” The word Nod does not mean, as the Vulgate renders it, “a fugitive.” It means “banishment” (iii, 24) and misery (Job ii, 11; Isaiah li, 19; Jeremiah xvi, 5). To ask where it was, or what place the sacred writer meant by it — if he meant any particular place at all — is quite futile. It is not even certain that the word *qid'math* means “to the East of,” for (as in ii, 14) it may be (as the LXX. renders it) “in front of” or “opposite to.”

“And Cain knew his wife.” Again there is a sort of hiatus in the story, which, heedless of all minor and irrelevant curiosities, and intent only on its one sacred end, proceeds direct to its point. Not a word is told us as to who Cain's wife was.

Two suppositions only seem possible, and neither is without difficulty:

a. One is that Cain's wife was his sister. On many grounds it is not easy to accept this view, although such marriages of close relations were not unknown in Egypt, in Greece, and even among the ancestors of the chosen race as in the case of Abraham, of Lot, and of the parents of Moses himself.¹

b. The only other possible theory seems to be that which was first argued out with great ability on scriptural grounds by Peyrerius in his “Præadamites”: that the Book of Genesis, in its moral and spiritual sketch of prehistoric days, was concerned only with one race of man, especially with the ancestors of the holy race of Seth; and that there existed in the world, from the first, other races which were not Adamite.² Some modern theologians of great eminence have believed that no other meaning can be given to the language of Saint Paul: “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.”³ It may be added that, manifold as are the difficulties and uncertainties of ethnology, the tendency of modern science seems to be toward a belief that man originated, in accordance with the divine laws, in several centers of the world's surface from which his various families spread to populate the world. Some of the arguments on this subject may be seen in “The Genesis of the Earth and Man,” by the late R. S. Poole, and there are good reasons to believe that, if Scripture nowhere *recognizes* a plurality of origin for different families of the universal human race, it does not, at any rate, exclude the possibility of such a view.

But the Yahvist does not pause to tell us who was Cain's wife; such information lay outside the deeper objects which he had in view, and is not of any moral or spiritual importance. Cain called his son Enoch. No derivation is offered: the word *chanak* means “to train,” or “to dedicate”; more than this we cannot say.

Again, with a great hiatus in the story, we are told that “*Cain built* (or ‘was building’) a city” — though nothing is said as to who could have been its inhabitants; and that he called it Enoch after his son. The aggregation of men into towns from the isolation of nomadic life marks a decided and, in many respects, a perilous advance of civilization. “Great cities,” a physician tells us, “are the graves of the physique of our race”; they are certainly in many instances the graves also of its best morality.

¹ Genesis xi, 29, xii, 13, xx, 5, 13; Exodus vi, 20.

² Peyrerius published his “Præadamitæ” in 1655, and though the book was “condemned and suppressed” it is still procurable with ease and is full of shrewdness and ability.

³ Romans v, 14.

The next verse gives only four names for the history of four generations, and the names suggest nothing but perplexities which cannot be solved. Enoch's son was Irad, "One who flees"; Irad's son was Mehujael, which might mean "stricken of God." His son was Methusael, which seems to mean "the man that is of God." His son was Lamech, which, from its Arabic congener, seems to mean "stalwart." No further questions as to these names, or as to their perplexing similarity to names in the line of Seth, can be answered.

But over the story of Lamech the Yahvist pauses. As "he took two wives," it seems to be indicated that he was the first introducer of the unprimitive, disastrous, and degrading practice of polygamy; and the names of his two wives—Adah, "adornment," and Zillah, "shade,"—with that of his daughter Naamah, "pleasant," are perhaps recorded to intimate a growing sense of the influence produced over the heart of men by the beauty of womanhood. With the sons of Lamech began an immense progress in the arts which add to the pleasure and power of life. Jabal—"increase"? the son of Adah—is the father of tent dwellers and cattle possession, the introducer of the pastoral life of tribes.¹ Jubal, the other son of Adah, was the inventor of music, "the father of all those who handle harp² and pipe." Tubal-Cain, son of Zillah, marks a more dangerous progress, which increased war and bloodshed. He was "a sharpener (or forger³) of every kind of instrument of brass and iron."⁴ In other words, he was the earliest of braziers and iron-smiths. His sister was named Naamah, "loveliness."

At this point is inserted the first specimen of Hebrew poetry, a song of three verses, each consisting of two lines of synonymous antithetic parallelism:

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice ;
Ye wives of Lamech, listen to my speech :
For I have slain a man for wounding me,
And a youth for bruising me :
If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,
Then Lamech seven and seventyfold."

Endless explanations have been offered of this enigmatic little poem, but it is now generally held to indicate the first instance of apology for that justifiable homicide in self-defense, which necessarily played a large part in the rude civilization and imperfect justice of ancient times. Apparently someone—perhaps a youth—had attacked and wounded Lamech; and he—strong in the weapons which his son Tubal-Cain had invented—had defended his own imperilled life, and in doing so had slain the aggressor. His wives might well be horrified at this shedding of blood. They might naturally dread lest Lamech, like Cain his ancestor, should be driven forth as a vagabond with the murderer's brand upon his brow. But Lamech dissipated their fears. He has committed homicide, but it was not a crime. He has but repelled a murderous assailant for wounding him. If the avenger of the murderer Cain was to undergo a sevenfold vengeance, then if any blood-avenger attempted to wreak vengeance upon Lamech for his mischance he would incur a seventy-seven fold retribution. Whether more than this is intended—whether the verses imply a defiant self-reliance, and a determination on Lamech's part to protect himself and to repel all attempt to punish him, without any reference to God and his laws—cannot be affirmed with any certainty.

At this point the Yahvist leaves forever the race of Cain; but legend and the Haggadah have been busy with the name and destiny of the first murderer.

The Rabbis drew from his story the lesson of the value of repentance. They say that Adam, meeting Cain, wondered at his escape from instant vengeance: "Father!" answered

¹ We can only guess at the meaning of the name; Jabal may mean "wanderer" or "leader," and Jubal "musician." (Compare *yobel*, jubilee.)

² Job xxi, 12, xxx, 31; Psalm cl, 4.

³ Authorized Version, margin, "whetter."

⁴ Vulgate, *Malleator et faber*. Revised Version, "the forger of every cutting instrument of brass and iron." By "brass" must be meant "bronze" or copper.

Cain, "I recognized my sin and repented, and God pitied me." "So great is the power of repentance," cried Adam; "and I knew it not!"¹

Reverting to our first parents, the narrator tells us that, after Abel's murder, another son was born to them when Adam was 130² years old, and that Eve called his name Seth, "substitute";³ for she regarded him as a gift from God "in the place of Abel whom Cain slew." In due time Seth had a son, whom he called Enos.⁴ All that we are told of Enos is that "he began to invoke the name of Yahveh," or according to another rendering "then began [men] to call with Yahveh's name," *i. e.*, to name and to worship him, and to call upon him by the name of Yaveh.⁵

The clause is full of difficulties, and the versions vary considerably both in the translation and the interpretation. The old explanation was that men then began "to call themselves by the name of Yahveh"; while Jewish writers (Josephus, and the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan) render it, "they began to *desecrate* the name of Yahveh by idolatries." There can, however, be little doubt that the rendering given in our King James and Revised Versions is correct, and that by this verse is meant the development of prayer and intelligent worship in the pious line of Seth. The Yahvist, unlike the Priestly writer, uses the covenant-name of God repeatedly in his earliest narratives, and does not seem to accept the view that Elohim had been unknown by the name of Yahveh before the call of Moses.⁶

CHAPTER V.

THE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND IN THE LINE OF SETH FROM ADAM TO NOAH.

P.

IN the fifth chapter we revert to the records of P, the Priestly writer of Genesis i. The name Elohim is again substituted for the name Yahveh. The vivid narrative of the Yahvist is followed by a list of names with formal chronological and statistical details. We also meet once more with the familiar phrases of P, *tol'doth*, "generations"; *d'môth* and *tselem*, "image and likeness"; and others; while there is scarcely an allusion to any question which affects spiritual or other directly human interests, apart from the actual genealogy.

We will first summarize the chapter, and will touch on some of the questions which it suggests as a *Sepher Tol'doth*, or "book of generations."

It says that after God had created the human race, male and female, and blessed them and called them man, Adam lived 130 years and begat Seth, lived 800 years longer, begat other sons and daughters, and died aged 930.

Seth lived 105 years, begat Enos; lived 807 years longer, and died aged 912. Caiman lived 70 years, begat Mahalaleel; lived 840 years longer, and died aged 910. Mahalaleel lived 65 years, begat Jared; lived 830 years longer, and died aged 895. Jared lived 162 years, begat Enoch; lived 800 years longer, and died aged 962. Enoch lived 65 years, begat Methuselah; lived 300 years longer, and died aged 365.

¹ Midrash Rabbah, I, §22.

² Genesis v, 3: "Begat a son in his own likeness."

³ Hebrew, Sheth. Others render it "foundation" or "appointed."

⁴ *Enôsh*, "man," with reference to his weakness, unless it be from an Arabic root connoting sociability.

⁵ Genesis iv, 26.

⁶ Exodus iii, 14, vi, 3: The words "I am that I am" (*i. e.*, "I am unchangeable"), also rendered "I become that I become" (Hofmann: *i. e.*, "I am ever revealing and manifesting myself anew") or, "I will be what I will be" (Robertson Smith).

Here at Enoch, "the seventh from Adam," the list is broken to account for the comparatively early death of Enoch by the clause that "he walked with God, and he was not, for God took him."

The shortest-lived of the antediluvian patriarchs is followed by the longest-lived; for Methuselah lived 187 years, begat Lamech; lived 782 years more, and died aged 969. Lamech lived 182 years, begat Noah; lived 595 years more, and died aged 777. At this point verse 29 is perhaps taken from the Yahvist, and has been inserted by the Redactor into the priestly narrative. It explains the name Noah by the remark of Lamech, "This one will comfort us from our work, and the toil of our hands from the ground which Yahveh hath cursed."

That the verse is an insertion into the narrative of P is now recognized by all the chief critics (1), because it reverts to the name Yahveh; (2), because it uses the word *itsābōn*, "sorrow," which is one of the words peculiar to J (iii, 16, 17); (3), because it directly alludes to the curse on the ground,¹ which has only been narrated by J; and (4), because it gives the explanation, or assonance, of the name of Noah after the usual manner of the Yahvist. The name Noah may mentally recall the verb *nacham*, "to comfort," but it is universally admitted that the name cannot be etymologically derived from the verb. Noah means "rest," and the following verb seems to involve a pregnant construction—"will comfort and give us rest." The source of the comfort is not in this place further indicated; the Rabbis made it refer prophetically to an invention of agricultural implements, or to the discovery of the vine.

We are not told the age of Noah at the birth of his firstborn, but only that by the time he was 500 years old he had three sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

Let us now touch on various questions and difficulties which this chapter suggests.

i. Are the numbers traditional or purely artificial, and, in that case, what is their significance, if they have any?

As regards this we must first observe that these numbers were so little regarded as fixed or sacred, that they differ widely in the Hebrew text, in the Samaritan Pentateuch and in the LXX.

Nothing has ever been made either of the figures of the Hebrew text or of their variations. Any attempt to examine the chronology closely would only lead us into perfectly fruitless and dubious intricacies. There are, indeed, ten generations, and ten, as the number of completeness, is frequently found both in the Pentateuch and in ancient mythologies; but no certain conclusion of any kind can be arrived at.

ii. As to the great ages attained by the patriarchs, it was clearly the object of the Hebrew writers to indicate the increasing contraction of human life since the antediluvian epoch. Thus, Noah lived 950 years; Abraham, 175; Jacob, 147; Moses, 120; Joshua, 110; whilst David was decrepit in the seventieth year. The psalmist represents three-score and ten as the natural duration of human life, and speaks of its extension even to eighty as rare and almost calamitous. Physiology has declared it to be an impossibility for man to live more than two hundred years, and the apologetic considerations urged in favor of the possibility—apart from miracle—are believed to be untenable. Attempts, have, therefore, been made to tamper with the plain, unvarying meaning of the word "year," and to argue that only months or years of three months are intended; or that by each name is meant a tribe of descendants also. These attempts, besides being in other respects baseless, are shown to be absurd by a mere glance at the narrative itself. If they be admitted, Mahalaleel and Enoch must have been parents at an age startlingly too early.

iii. From the etymology of the names nothing is deducible but nugatory results. For theoretic purposes they are as uncertain as the dim analogies suggested for them from various ancient mythologies. We can only note with surprise the close resemblance of three of these

¹ *Adamah*, not *eretz*, "the earth."

names — Jared, Mahalaleel, and Methuselah to those of Irad, Mahujael, and Methushael in the line of Cain; and the actual identity of the names of two Sethites and two Cainites — Enoch and Lamech.

iv. The expression that “Enoch walked with God” (v, 22, 24) indicates a close and holy union of his will with the will of his Creator and is stronger than “walking before God” (xvii, 1), or “walking after God” (Deuteronomy xiii, 4). But the simple expression was too anthropomorphic for translators and Targumists. The LXX. and the Peshitto render it, “Enoch was well-pleasing to God.” And Onkelos has “Enoch walked in the fear of Jehovah.” The Book of Enoch says (xii, 2), “All his action was with the holy ones and with the watchers during his life.” The notice respecting him seems to be introduced to show that his comparatively early death was neither a punishment nor a calamity, since in an age which abounded with evil the holiest of the patriarchs was also the shortest lived. His end is simply and vaguely indicated by the words, “he was not; for Elohim took him.” In other words, he passed away. In the Septuagint we read, “he was not found, because God translated him.” The son of Sirach (xliv, 16) uses the same phrase. He says (xlix, 14) “upon the earth was no man created like Enoch; for he was taken from the earth.” Philo takes Enoch’s translation as a symbol of his change to a better life and ignores his ascension. This seems to have been the view of the early Jews. In the “*Bereshith Rabba*” (xxv), it is said that his translation consisted in abandoning wickedness and becoming pious, and God said that if he continued pious he would take him out of the world. The Targum of Onkelos accordingly renders it, “He was not, because God made him to die.”

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says: “By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God translated him: for before his translation he hath had witness borne to him that he had been well-pleasing unto God; and without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him.”¹ In the text of Genesis it is not said that he did not die, but this is perhaps implied. In the Epistle of Jude (verses 14, 15) we read that “Enoch, the seventh from Adam,” prophesied the second advent of Christ to judge sinners.

Enoch’s son Methuselah was the longest lived of all the patriarchs. He attained the age of 969 years. His son Lamech was 182 years old when he begat a son, whom he named Noah, or “rest,” saying that “he shall comfort us from our work and labor from the ground.”² I have already mentioned that, according to Jewish tradition, Noah comforted men and made labor amid the thorns and the thistles of the cursed ground more easy by inventing plows and other instruments of husbandry.

Lamech died at the age of 777; and by the time that Noah was 500 years old he had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth; Shem may mean “renown,” Ham “heat,” Japheth “the widener.” It is clear that materials no longer exist for a full understanding of what was intended by these early traditions and details.

¹ Hebrews xi, 5 (Revised Version).

² Not “because of the ground,” but “from our labor (arising) from the ground.” The words in Hebrew have a triple rhyme, and an assonance. The Book of Enoch (cv) has marvelous tales of Noah’s supernatural beauty, etc.

CHAPTER VI.

J.

THE CORRUPTION OF MAN.

(GENESIS VI, 1 TO 8.¹)

IF the critics be right, it is the Yahvist who here introduces, probably from external sources of ancient and universal tradition, a brief and somewhat enigmatic episode to account for the corruption of mankind. The passage is meant to show the moral necessity for the flood, which destroyed the world of the ungodly.

The patriarchal age was by no means an age of universal innocence. On the contrary, as men began to multiply, and sons and daughters were born to them, the pride of womanhood led to luxury and vanity, then the beauty of womanhood tempted depraved hearts to the substitution of carnal desire for holy married love. The desecration of the primeval sanctities in ordinary life led to strange, unhallowed unions, "and it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair, and took for themselves wives of all that they chose."

i. Who were these "Sons of Elohim?"² In the Bible the word always means superior beings of heavenly origin. They are so called in Job, Daniel, and the Psalms.³ Hence, all the most ancient interpreters so understood the phrase in this place. It is the view taken in the Book of Enoch, the Book of Jubilees, and Philo. It is also the view unmistakably expressed in II. Peter ii, 4: "For if God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; and spared not the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others a herald of righteousness, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly . . ." We have a reference to the same apostacy in the Epistle of Saint Jude (verse 6), "And angels which kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day . . . having in like manner with these [Sodom and Gomorrah] given themselves over to fornication, and gone after strange flesh." In the Book of Enoch this view is set forth at great length (verses 6-10). We are there told how these fallen and self-corrupted denizens of heaven, to the number of 200, descended on Mount Hermon, chose the most beautiful women for their unnatural wooing, taught them luxury and witchcraft, and became by them the fathers of giants 3,000 cubits high, who devastated the world into famine and misery. At last four great angels, Michael, Gabriel, Surjan, Urgan, appealed to God to interpose and punish. Therefore, God flung down Azazel, the wickedest of these fallen spirits, on a bed of sharp rocks, and bound him in fetters till he shall be flung at last into the fiery pool. After this the giant demons, who were the offspring of these corrupted angels, fought against and destroyed each other and they, too, were reserved in darkness for their final doom.⁴

But the apparently mythical character of these loves of the fallen angels with the daughters of men led to early efforts to eliminate such a meaning from the sacred text.⁵ This can only be done by methods of subterfuge, and unconsciously dishonest exegesis, which,

¹ Verse 7, chapter vi, seems to belong to the Redactor.

² Never "sons of Yahveh," because that is the covenant-name of God with man.

³ Job i, 6, ii, 1, xxxviii, 7; Psalms xxix, 1, lxxxix, 7; Daniel iii, 25.

⁴ See Jellinek in "Midrash Abchir." Azazel (Leviticus xvi, 8) the inventor of rouge, etc., is stigmatized as the worst.

⁵ See Perowne in "Smith's Dictionary," s. v. Noah.

springing not from fearless inquiry but from *a priori* dogmatic bias, have reduced whole volumes, nay whole libraries, of Scriptural interpretation to self-refuting futility.

These attempts took two directions.

i. The Targums of Pseudo-Jonathan and Onkelos and the "*Bereshith Rabba*"¹—followed by Saadia Rashi, Abn Ezra, and in modern times by Spinoza, Herder, and Buttmann—understood the "Sons of Elohim" to mean "the sons of princes." But this way of escape from a view which they disliked is impossible. There would have been no monstrous criminality in the inter-marriage of the mighty and the poor; and further, "The daughters of Adam," *i. e.*, of the human race (*benoth ha adham*), cannot possibly mean merely women of humble rank, nor would "daughters of men" be, in that case, a true antithesis to "sons of God."

ii. Some of the later Fathers adopted another interpretation no less imaginary, and were followed by the reformers, and by masses of modern pre-critical or biased exegetes like Hævernick, Hengstenberg, and others. They explained "the sons of God" to be the pious race of Seth, "which unwisely mixed itself in marriage with the wicked Cainites." But, even if "sons of God" could be thus baldly and abruptly used to describe "pious men," it is inconceivable that daughters of men should have a perfectly general meaning in verse 1 and a very special one in the next clause.

iii. Other glosses are isolated and need no notice. There can be no question that we are here meant to understand the unlawful intercourse of women and fallen spirits.

As in the Book of Enoch and in the Epistle to Saint Peter and Saint Jude, Yahveh is rendered indignant by this depravity, and he said, "my spirit shall not abide (or rule) in man forever."² Whatever be the exact significance of the verb, the general sense seems to be that God will take away from man the breath of divine life which he had depraved.

The next words usually rendered "for that he also is flesh" are no less uncertain. The word *b'shaggam* is of highly dubious meaning. Dillmann, with a slight change of reading, follows Gesenius, Vater, and Tuch, and renders "on account of their error he is flesh"; and this rendering is given in the margin of our Revised Version in the form, "in their going astray they are flesh." The text of the word is probably corrupt. Nor can we be sure as to the meaning of "but his days shall be 120 years." This is usually understood to mean that human life would hereafter be shortened to the limit of 120 years. But there are two difficulties in this view. On the one hand, though we are no longer told of men living 900 years and upward, yet Noah, Abram, and the postdiluvian Fathers, from Shem to Terah,³ all greatly exceeded the limit of 120 years, and, on the other hand, in historical times 80 years, not 120, became the normal limit of human life.⁴

There is, therefore, much to be said for the opinion that in these words a respite of 120 years as a time for repentance is granted to men before the deluge. In the East 120 years is "an age" and an astronomical cycle (12 x 10).

The fourth verse seems to be partly retrospective. It tells us that the "giants (*n'philim*) were on the earth in those days," and that afterward there were heroes of old (*gibborim*) "the men of renown." The word *n'philim* seems to be derived from *naphal*, "to fall." It has been variously rendered, "giants," "robbers," "men of violence," "bastards," and "fallen spirits." All that we can say is that in this slight allusion we are in the same sphere of ancient traditions as that of the Arabians, who tell of their giant predecessors the Adites, the Themudites. The children of Israel looked on the colossal sons of Anak as akin to these prehistoric races.⁵ Perhaps the widely diffused belief in gigantic ancient tribes may have been fostered or created by the discovery of fossil bones, which belong to extinct animals but were mistaken for human remains.

¹ Chapter xxvi.

² So margin Revised Version; Vulgate, *non permanebit*.

³ Genesis xi, 10-33.

⁴ Psalm xc, 10; compare I. Samuel iv, 15-18.

⁵ Numbers xiii, 33, where they are expressly called Nephilim.

Amid the universal corruption "Yahveh repented that he had made man, since every form of the thought of his heart was only evil, and he was pained in his heart."

Of course, there is another and higher sense in which "God is not a man, that he should repent."¹ But the expression is perfectly intelligible, if taken as frankly anthropopathic. Yet even as far back as the days of the LXX. there was an attempt to smooth it down. Onkelos renders it, "And spake by his word to break their strength according to his will," and Pseudo-Jonathan, "And disputed with his word concerning him."

Yahveh, therefore, determined to blot out from the face of the earth alike the human race, and animals, and reptiles, and birds, which were regarded as sharing with man the common curse. "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

THE FLOOD, AS NARRATED BY THE PRIESTLY WRITER.

(GENESIS VI, 9 TO 22.)

P.

That we here pass from J to P is indicated at once by the new heading used exclusively by the Priestly writer, "These are the generations of Noah." The general pragmatism of the narrative, the formal introduction of dates and numbers, the recurrent phrases, the use of the name Elohim, and many other identities of style with his previous and subsequent narratives sufficiently indicate the author. Noah is introduced as though he had not been previously mentioned, as "a righteous man and perfect" among his contemporaries "in his generation" (King James Version). Like Enoch he walked with God. Saint Peter calls him "a preacher of righteousness," and the Koran, *Nabi Allah*, "prophet of God." He had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The earth was utterly full of corruption and violence, and by a divine "measure for measure" man's corruption necessitated, nay involved, his destruction. Consequently God reveals to Noah his determination to obliterate all living things, and bade him build an ark² of gopher wood (some resinous tree, perhaps juniper), and to smear it within and without with pitch,³ to prevent leakage. It was to be made in cells,⁴ in the shape of a huge chest of three stories, 300 cubits long, 50 broad, and 30 high (*i. e.*, 450,000 cubits in contents). It was to have a door at one side; and perhaps—for the meaning is uncertain—a window,⁵ a cubit high, running round its four sides to give light. In this ark he should be saved amid the universal destruction of the coming flood.⁶ With him should be saved his wife, his three sons, and their three wives. He was to take with him pairs of animals, birds, and reptiles, which should "come to him," to preserve them alive. He was also to gather stores of food for himself and for them; and all these commands he obeyed. Such is the narrative of the Priestly writer. We will consider its significance and some of the problems it suggests, when we have given the parallel narrative of the Yahvist.

¹ Numbers xxiii, 19; I. Samuel xv, 29. "The strength of Israel will not lie nor repent"; after verse 11, "It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king." ² *Tēbāh*, "an oblong chest." Perhaps an Egyptian word.

³ *Kopher*, bitumen or asphalt.

⁴ *Kinnām*, literally "nests."

⁵ Not "a lattice," as vii, 11, viii, 2; nor "an aperture," as in viii, 6; but *tsohar*, "light," not used elsewhere but in the dual, "double-light," equivalent to midday.

⁶ *Mabbul*, "flood"; only of the deluge (Psalm xxix, 10) "the Lord sat as king at the flood" (Revised Version).

CHAPTER VII.

THE FLOOD AND THE NARRATIVE OF THE YAHVIST.

(GENESIS VII, 1-19 — J, EXCEPT PERHAPS, 6-9, 11, 13-16*a*.)

J.

THE Lord bids Noah and his house enter the ark, and take to him all clean creatures and birds by sevens, and all unclean by pairs, for after seven days it should rain for forty days and nights, and every living thing should be destroyed. The sixth verse, which says that Noah was 600 years old when he entered the ark, perhaps belongs to P.

The writer does not tell us how Noah was to know which beasts were clean and which were unclean, so many centuries before the institution of Levitism; but the necessity for taking seven pairs of the clean creatures arose from the fact that a thank offering "of every clean beast and every clean fowl" is mentioned in viii, 20. The expression "seven by seven" (vii, 2), taken in connection with the remark that all creatures went into the ark two by two, seems clearly to show that seven pairs of every clean beast and fowl are meant. The numbers "seven" and "forty" have a symbolic significance. The first mystically indicates "the striving of man up to God"; the second is constantly used in Scripture with connotations of penalty.¹

The mention of the fact that Yahveh "shut the door after Noah," and the brief description of the result of the deluge in verses 12, 17, 22, 23 may also belong to J.

The rest of the chapter, in the opinion of most modern critics, belongs to P or to the Redactor. It tells us that the fountains of the great deep were broken up and the windows² of heaven opened on the seventeenth day of the second month (April or May³); and that on that day, Noah, his family, and all animals, two and two, male and female, and "every bird of every wing," all entered the ark. The ark was uplifted by the increasing waters, which covered "all the high mountains under the whole heaven." Rising above them to a depth of fifteen cubits. It is probably to the Yahvist that we owe the statement that everything perished except Noah and his family, while perhaps it was the Priestly writer who recorded that the waters prevailed upon the earth 150 days.

DETAILS ABOUT THE FLOOD.

(GENESIS VIII, 2*b* TO 20.⁴)

The narrative mainly of J is continued in Genesis viii. The rain ceased, the waters ebbed away and the earth was dried by a wind sent from God. On the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat.⁵ After forty days Noah opened the window of the ark and sent out the raven which the old Accadians regarded as "the bird of destiny," but it flew to and fro and did not return. Then he sent forth a dove, which, finding no rest for the sole of her foot, flew back to the ark and Noah pulled her in. After seven days he again let her fly and she returned at eventide with a fresh olive leaf in her beak.⁶ After

¹ See Numbers xiv, 34; Deuteronomy xxv, 3, etc.

² Hebrew *arubbôth*, "The latticed windows." Compare Isaiah xxiv, 18; Job xxxviii, 16; Proverbs viii, 28; Spurrell.

³ Or according to others, *Marchesvan*, the rain month, October.

⁴ Probably verses 1 and 2*a* do not belong to J, and other verses seem to be added, *e. g.*, 3*b*-5, 14-19.

⁵ Ararat, a country. II. Kings xix, 37; Isaiah xxxvii, 38; (LXX., Armenia, which is, in Assyrian, *U-ra-ar-ti*). Saint Jerome says that Ararat is the plain at the foot of Taurus through which flows the Araxes. There is no proof that Mount Masis, the highest peak, is intended.

⁶ The olive flourishes in Armenia, and it is said to survive under water.

waiting another seven days he sent her forth again. She returned no more and Noah removed the covering of the ark, looked, and the face of the ground was dry. The word used for "covering" is used also for the skin-covering of the tabernacle.

Let us now consider various questions which naturally arise from the mosaic work of these combined narratives. What is the moral and spiritual significance of the deluge? That question is sufficiently answered in the New Testament.

i. It was the punishment for sin; it was a flood "brought upon the world of the ungodly." Nor was it an irremediable, sudden destruction, sent without warning. On the contrary, for 120 years Noah had been a preacher of righteousness to his guilty contemporaries, and the long suffering of God had waited in the days of Noah.¹ Thus regarded, the story of the deluge is a stern but most salutary lesson for man. It represents the eternal truth that God hates sin, and that when sin has become incurably ingrained in a nation, in a church, in a race, in a world, in the heart of an individual, then, at all costs, and because of that eternal love of which sin is the defiance, God will obliterate and sweep it away.

ii. It was a new beginning. When evil has become fixed, finished, and incurable, the pit swallows it up; the earth as it were opens her mouth to vomit out her inhabitants (Leviticus xviii, 25).

iii. It was a lustral wave which swept over the polluted earth. Thus, Saint Peter expressly says that Christ, "being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit, in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which aforetime were disobedient, when the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water: which also, after a true likeness [or "in the antetype"], doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."² In the point of view of the great apostle the deluge was the baptism and regeneration of the world.

iv. In the contemplation of these moral and spiritual conceptions, minor questions of history, archæology, and criticism shrink into comparative insignificance. They were, indeed, of little or no importance in the mind of the writers. All such questions we will glance at a little later. Meanwhile it is surely an unmistakable fact that here we have two separate narratives side by side. Apart from obvious repetitions, and differences of style and expression, there appear to be distinct variations between the details of P and J. Omitting any minor points we may mention three of these. (1) In P (vi, 19-20) Noah is commanded to take with him into the ark one pair of all living animals, birds, and reptiles: but in J he is bidden to take with him all clean animals and fowls by sevens, *i. e.*, fourteen of each; and unclean species by single pairs (vii, 2-3). The reason for this discrepancy can only be a matter of conjecture. Reuss thinks that the Yahvist supposed that some of the clean creatures would be for food, while the Priestly writer regarded the Sethites as vegetarians. Others suppose that the extra number of clean creatures was to provide for the needs of sacrifice. (2) In P (vii, 11, viii, 2) the deluge is attributed to the breaking up of the fountains of the deep, and the opening of the windows of heaven. In J (vii, 4-12) it is ascribed to the agency of rain only. (3) There seems to be an irreconcilable chronology in the reports of the deluge. In P (vii, 11) the deluge begins on the seventeenth day of the second month of the 600th year of Noah. In 150 days the waters have attained their maximum depth (viii, 3). This brings us to the seventeenth day of the seventh month, so that the rise of the waters lasted for five months of thirty days. The mountain tops appear on the first day of the tenth month (viii, 5). By the first day of Noah's 601st year (viii, 13) the face of the ground is dry; and the earth is

¹ I. Peter iii, 20.

² I. Peter iii, 18, 21. Compare Job xxii, 15-19; Isaiah xxiv, 5, 6, 18. "The earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth." Matthew xxiv, 38 ff.; Luke xvii, 26, ff.; II. Peter ii, 5, iii, 6.

perfectly dry by the twenty-seventh day of the second month. This gives us a lunar year, from the seventeenth of the second month of the 600th year of Noah's life to the seventeenth of the second month of the 601st year, and ten days, *i. e.*, 370 days. Now this is neither a lunar nor a solar year.¹ But in J the duration of the flood seems to be much shorter. Noah is bidden to enter the ark (vii, 1), because, in seven days (vii, 4) the rain will begin. It rains for forty days and nights (vii, 12, 17) and after forty days (viii, 6) Noah opens the ark, and lets loose, at periods of seven days, "the raven," and then three successive times a dove. It is not easy to see how to manipulate forty and twenty-eight, equivalent to sixty-eight, days so as to reconcile the calculation with the three hundred and seventy days of P, though, doubtless, the task may not be beyond the skill of harmonists, who attack it with determined prepossessions, and by all sorts of strange methods force the two stories to say exactly the same thing.

v. Was the flood universal, as regards the whole surface of the globe? The difficulties of accepting such a view in the face of the facts revealed to us by scientific examinations of the earth's surface, its existing animals and its fossils, are immense and, indeed, insuperable, but (1) the flood is represented as universal, as regards that race of man with which the sacred writers are dealing—the degenerate Sethites—and they might have been destroyed by a partial deluge; and (2) it is wholly needless to press literally the oriental hyperbole that, "all the high mountains which are under the whole heavens were covered," and that "the waters prevailed fifteen cubits above them." Is there a single commentator who has ever dreamed of literally interpreting the phrase of Obadiah in I. Kings xviii, 10, that "There is no nation or kingdom, whither my Lord hath not sent to seek thee?" Or the statement (Genesis xli, 57) that "all countries came to Egypt to buy corn?" It is equally superfluous to insist on the literal meaning here. If, because of this single phrase and a few other general expressions, anyone thinks it a matter of very ignorant faith to believe that there were fifteen cubits—more than twenty-two feet—of water above the summits of Chimborazo and Dhawalaghiri, science and criticism are not for him. Intellectual childishness and *a priori* dogmatism, even though in these matters they shut their eyes to the clearest indication of that light of advancing knowledge, which, like all other truth, is a revelation from God, need not, however, hinder the reception of moral and spiritual truth. The teaching of vital truth was the one end of these sacred writings, which, alike for the wise and for the foolish, for the learned and for the ignorant, "contain all things necessary for salvation." If we seek and find that divine revelation, we need not be troubled by minor difficulties.

vi. Immense pains have been bestowed on the attempt to explain the construction of the ark. A Dutch Mennonite, named Jansen, in the year 1609, attempted to construct an ark on the same model at Hoorn. The attempt failed, because the structure broke to pieces. The word *tébah* is apparently Egyptian and is only used again for the ark of bulrushes in which the child Moses was laid.² The description (vi, 15) is that of a colossal, oblong chest—a parallelopiped of wood, smeared with bitumen, of vast cubic contents, three stories high, but apparently with only a single door in its side. Apart from a special series of miracles, such a structure would have been equally impossible and useless. If it could be so built at all, it must have sunk deep into the water, and then the numberless mass of large animals, wild and tame, of birds and reptiles, amounting to many thousand, in the lowest story, could have had neither light nor air. All that we are told about any window is couched in the obscure words (vi, 16) "A light" (or "roof") "shalt thou make to the ark, and to a cubit shalt thou finish it upward" (or "from above"). On the supposition that the writer attached importance to the details, and was not exclusively occupied in impressing moral truth by powerful symbols, it is clear that, in all which affects the ark, we are plunged into a complicated series of stupendous and

¹ Twelve lunar months only make about 354 days, but the day of the new moon was often counted twice,

² Egyptian *iba*, "chest"; and *tpt*, "boat."

continuous miraeles, on which we can throw no further light, and from which no further lessons are any longer discoverable.

vii. Legends of a deluge and of the preservation of one righteous man with his family to repopulate the earth, though they are not, as has sometimes been asserted, universal, are yet widely diffused. They exist among very different classes of nations. They are not found, apparently, among nations which inhabit countries which from their physiography are exempt from such cataclysms, as, for instance, the Egyptians, the Arabians, and in some cases supposed "traditions" among savages were not indigenous, but were only the dim, ineongrous echoes of what they had heard from Christian travelers and missionaries. Among the Chinese, liable to overwhelming disaster by the flooding of such rivers, as the Hoang Ho, it was natural to expect stories of deluges. But the features of closest resemblance to the sacred narrative are found in the traditions of the Greeks, the Hindoos, and above all the ancient Chaldeans.

1. The Greeks had two such myths: that of Ogyges and that of Deucalion. That of Ogyges is very vague and is exclusively connected with Bœotia, and the lake Copais; but that of Deucalion in many incidents resembles the Noachian deluge. The world had sunk into infamy. The ocean and the clouds combined to drown all living creatures; but the pious Deucalion, guided by his father Prometheus, had built a chest in which he floated safely with his wife Pyrrha, and by which he was safely borne to the peaks of Parnassus. There he sacrificed a thankoffering. As given by Lucian, this legend is connected with Hieropolis. Deucalion, like Noah, endeavors to discover the condition of the earth by sending forth a dove from his ark which returns the first time, but not the second.

2. In the Indian tradition a demon, Hayagriva, steals the Vedas and the world is plunged into wickedness, from which only the seven saints and Satyavrata or Vaivaswata, the seventh Manu, are exempt. Vishnu appearing to Satyavrata, as a fish, prophesies that in seven days there will be a universal deluge, and warns the pious king to take with him into an ark the seven saints, their wives, and one pair of all animals. In seven days the world is overwhelmed in the waters of the ocean, swollen by torrents of rain. Satyavrata sees a boat, enters it with the saints, is drawn by Vishnu himself in the form of a horned fish till after many years he is left safe on Mount Himaran, and becomes the seventh Manu. After this follows an incident which somewhat resembles the curse of Ham.

3. Still nearer to the Jewish tradition is that of Chaldea. Thirty years ago it was only known from the meager account of Berosus (died about 260 B. C.), but in 1872 Mr. George Smith translated a much fuller form of this myth from Assyrian bricks in the British Museum which had been copied for the famous library of King Assur-bani-pal (668-626 B. C.). Xisuthros, called also Hassis-Hadra ("pious and wise"),¹ represents the ten generations from the first man. The god Belus prophesies to him a vast rain flood, which shall begin on the fifteenth of the month Daisios. He builds a ship 3,000 feet long and 1,200 feet broad.² A voice says to him, "enter the ship and shut the door." He has taken with him specimens of all animals, birds, and reptiles, for which he has stored provisions. The flood lasts seven days and is drained off in seven days. When the rain ceases, he sends out first a dove and then a swallow, which return. The third time he sends out a raven which wades in the shallows and does not return. Meanwhile the ship of Xisuthros had grounded on an Armenian mountain named Nizir. He leaves it with his wife, his daughter, and a pilot, erects an altar and offers sacrifices. His ark was said to be preserved in the mountains of Armenia, and pieces of it smeared with bitumen were used as amulets.

¹ This name, which Professor Sayce writes Adrakhasis, occurs in another fragment of the Chaldean poem. See also George Smith, "Chaldean Genesis," pp. 262-294.

² It has six stories and nine interior compartments. The old Chaldean poem is quoted by Professor Sayce, "The Higher Criticism and the Monuments," pp. 107-113.



NOAH'S SACRIFICE.

Gen VIII 20.

4. But amid many curious resemblances it will be seen that in every instance the sacred narrative is quite incomparably superior in sobriety and spiritual meaning. It alone is purely monotheistic, and it avoids the monstrous polytheism and unworthy, incongruous elements in which the ancient mythologies are involved. The sacred writers do not pause for emotion or poetic description. They are intent on the moral lesson that God hates sin and saves the righteous.

That there must be some connection between the Babylonian epic and the narrative of P and J is certain; but, though the Babylonian poem is of very great antiquity, it cannot be shown that the sacred writers have directly availed themselves of it.

THE SACRIFICE AND THE PROMISE.

(GENESIS VIII, 20 TO 22.)

After leaving the ark with his family, and all the living things which had been saved, Noah built an altar—the first mentioned in Scripture—and offered burnt offerings of “every clean beast and of every clean fowl.” Yahveh smelled “the odor of satisfaction,” and said “to himself” that he would never again curse the ground because of man nor smite every living thing. The cogitation of man’s heart is indeed evil from his youth. But God would deal in other ways of retribution and deliverance with this original corruption and its developments, and till the end of time, days and seasons in their cycles of benevolence would still continue—seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night. The Lord does not promise that sin shall ever escape punishment, but only that the earth shall not be again overwhelmed by an universal flood. Here again we find a resemblance in the old Chaldean epoch, in which Ea says to Bel:

“Let the sinner bear his own sin;
May he not be cut off! be merciful that he be not destroyed!
Instead of causing a deluge, let lions come and minish mankind.
Let hyenas come . . . let there be a famine . . .
Instead of causing a deluge, let the plague-god come and minish mankind.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE NOACHIAN COVENANT AND ITS SYMBOL.

(GENESIS IX, 1 TO 17.)

P.

NOW that the deluge was over, God—Elohim—blessed the sole human survivors of the drowned world, bade them be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth,¹ and gave them the dominion of awe-inspiring superiority over every living thing. Now, too, for the first time, man is granted “every living creature” as well as the “green herb” for food; only he must not eat flesh with its soul, which is its blood.² We find the same prohibition strongly insisted on in the Levitic ordinances (Leviticus xvii, 10-14). Whatever sheds human blood, whether

¹This command has been already recorded (viii, 16-17).

²The blood is the *nephesh*, physical principle of life, not the *ruach* or spirit. Compare Virgil “Æneid,” ix, 349, “*purpuream vomit ille animam*.” This command specially forbade the brutal custom, prevalent till recent years in Abyssinia, of cutting steaks out of the living animal. Compare I. Samuel xiv, 32. It has had a immense and permanent influence on the Jewish race and was imposed even on the Gentiles at the dawn of Christianity (Acts xv, 20, 29).

man or beast, must be put to death for violating the image of God in man.¹ Before the reign of law and justice was securely established it was most necessary to impress on man the inherent sanctity of human life, which many nations, both savage and civilized, have held so cheap. This simple covenant was required of man; and God on his part promised that there should never more be a flood to destroy the earth and appointed his bow in the cloud as a sign of the eternal covenant between him and the earth. To this promise Isaiah alludes in the passage (liv, 8-9), "In overflowing wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of ['the days of'] Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee" (Revised Version).

Those who impugn the story of the rainbow on the ground that whenever there was rain and sun there must also have been rainbows raise a needless difficulty. The passage does not say that the rainbow was first created after the deluge, but only that it was then first made the sign of the new and blessed covenant. The word rendered "I have set my bow in the clouds" means literally "I have given."

No more suitable sign that God has vouchsafed the promise of mercy could have been appointed than that lovely and radiant phantom of "painted tears." Even in the final book of the New Testament we find this emblem of eternal compassion in the "rainbow round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald";² and it is described as forming his aureole of angels which are sent on the messages of the Almighty.³ Many nations have turned to the rainbow with instinctive joy and hope, and have connected it with the behests of heaven. To the Greeks it was the shining path, down which "golden winged Iris, the daughter of Thaumas by Electra, daughter of Oceanus, descended with the compassionate mandates of Zeus"; and Homer also speaks of it as "a portent," though not always of peace. In the Scandinavian Sagas it is the bridge between heaven and earth. The course of so many centuries and millenniums has not in the least robbed it of sacred significance.

THE SIN OF NOAH—OF HAM AND CANAAN.

(GENESIS IX, 18 TO 26.)

J.

The three sons of Noah in the order of their birth were Shem, Ham, and Japheth.⁴ These repopled the earth; and the son of Ham was Canaan. It soon, alas! became too clear that "The device of man's heart was evil from his youth," and that sin born of the evil propensity would still hold sway in the freshly lustrated world. There was to be yet another tree of the knowledge of evil. For "Noah, the husbandman, began and planted a vineyard."⁵ The vine was in itself a precious and beautiful gift of God, and the fruit of the grape made, in its unfermented form, a delicious and wholesome beverage. Even in its fermented form, it would have been harmless, if it had not been perverted by the powers of evil for the frightful misery and age-long destruction of the human race. But under existing circumstances, as our greatest living statesman has said, "strong drink produces and has produced evils more deadly than war, famine, and pestilence combined." The tempting opportunity fatally meets the susceptible

¹ So in Exodus xxi, 28, the ox which has gored a man must be killed, and as late as 1486 a boar which had killed a child was executed on the scaffold at Ypres.

² Revelation iv, 3. ³ Revelation x, 1.

⁴ The order of birth is, however, uncertain. In Genesis x, 21, "Shem . . . the brother of Japheth the elder" (King James and LXX.), should, perhaps, be "the elder brother of Japheth" (Revised Version; King James Version, margin). Josephus puts them in the order, Shem, Japheth, Ham. Shem is placed first in v, 32, vii, 13, ix, 18, x, 1; I. Chronicles i, 4.

⁵ Such, though the epithet, "the husbandman," is surprising, seems to be the true translation. Literally, it is the "man of the earth" (*ish ha-adāmāh*).

disposition. The pleasurable instigation from without, united with the dangerous impulse from within, seduces and masters the human will, and thus the fruit of the vine is turned into a lethal agent which makes the god-like soul of man blighted and the abject slave of a dead chemical product. Under the influence of drink, man—created in the divine image, man with the sign of his redemption marked visibly upon his forehead—is smitten with the serpentine curse of degradation and becomes “earthly, sensual, devilish,” until at last he sinks to the worst depths of infamy. The moderate use of wine is nowhere decisively forbidden in Scripture. The temptation to excess in the East is far less intense and the examples of excess are far fewer than in Western and Northern regions. So far as wine was used in perfect moderation to promote the harmless mirth of feasts and make glad the heart of man there was no necessity for its prohibition.¹ The sin begins with the abuse, not with the temperate use; with the excess, not with the participation, except so far as the latter—under certain fatal conditions of heredity and of national unwisdom—conduces inevitably to the former. But even the moderate and unforbidden use of intoxicants may become perilous when considerations of greed, and appetite, and custom are given undisturbed predominance for the utter and wholesale destruction of souls for which Christ died. Asceticism, self-torture, fasting, abstinence are not of themselves among the necessary requirements of pure religion and undefiled. The fruits of the spirit under the old covenant, as under the new, are love, joy, peace. But there are circumstances in which abstinence from every form of wine becomes an imperative duty for the tempted individual, as the only means by which he can retain the self-control which distinguishes between manhood and animalism. It may also become a counsel of mercy and perfection for thousands of the untempted who feel it a duty, by precept and example, to help and to save their miserable, perishing, and tempted brethren.

The wide dissemination of the invention of fermented drink is shown by the fact that the root for the word “wine” is found in so many languages. Many nations have, under one form and another, worshiped

“Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
Crushed the sweet poison of misused wine.”

Yet, whether worshiped as Bacchus or as Osiris, the discoverer of intoxicants gave to the world the most potent of all the implements which “the evil genii whose blessings are curses in disguise” have ever been able to employ for the damnation of human souls. And here, thus early in the world’s history, the peril which lay in this discovery is foreshadowed. In one line we read that Noah planted a vineyard; in the next that he drank of the wine and became drunken; in the next that the righteous patriarch, who had been saved from the overwhelming flood, lay uncovered in his tent, a spectacle of shame and infamy; in the next that his degradation called forth all that was loathly in the vile and impure disposition of his grandson and his second son, and then that, as a consequence of this foul and hideous scene, a curse is laid on the whole family of man. The spectacle of a father’s shame would have awakened a blush of pity—a throb of anguish too deep for tears—in any mind of ordinary decency. In the base, corrupted mind of Ham—the type of all minds which exult in the unashamed self-revelation of human weakness, and make it a subject not of modest self-humiliation, but of jibes and sneers—the pitiable scene only evoked his own radical worthlessness. Instead of covering the sin with holy compassion, which we ought all to do always, when no higher duty requires its exposure and its punishment, Ham went out and told his two brethren, evidently with mockery and malignant comment. Shem and Japheth were of nobler moral temperament and knew what holiness, and filial piety, and delicate dignity required. They took “the upper garment” of their father, laid it on both their shoulders, and “going backward with averted

¹ It may, however, be said that in not a few places it is discouraged and made a topic of most earnest warning: *e. g.*, Proverbs xxiii, 29-35, xx, 1; Isaiah xxviii, 7; Hosea iv, 11; Joel i, 5; Ephesians v, 18; I. Corinthians vi, 10, etc.

faces so that they did not see the nakedness of their father," laid the robe over him, and over his sin and shame.

Drunkenness was never a common vice in Palestine. We are not told that our Lord, during his mortal life, once saw that spectacle of human beings in the shame of drunkenness which is so miserably and infamously common among us. Yet even the Jewish Rabbis, in their comments on these few verses, show us how entirely they realize the deep moral warning which lies in the terse and solemn narrative.

"When Noah awoke from his wine."¹ Under these simple words lies all the agony of a conscience, startled out of its drunken slumber—he becomes conscious of the shaken torch and snaky tresses of that Erinny of the dawn which avenges the crimes of the darkness. He knew what his younger son had done unto him.² How he knew this we are not told, nor is it essential to the narrative. On becoming aware of the shameful fact, Noah uttered in prophetic verse his deep malediction on Canaan:

"Cursed be Canaan;
A servant of servants shall he be to his brethren."

No answer can be given to the question why the curse fell on Canaan especially, unless it be that Ham was punished in part by the curse upon his son, and that God visits "the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate him." It must not, however, be supposed that, as in the proverb quoted and repudiated by Ezekiel, "The fathers did eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth were set on edge." Each soul, we may be sure, bore its own iniquity, and the soul that sinneth "it shall die." The people of Canaan were looked upon by the Israelites as prodigies of revolting wickedness. It seemed natural that on them the curse should have fallen, and it did fall with exceptional ruin on this contaminated race. They were in great measure extirpated; but the remnant of them were enslaved, partly by the descendants of Shem in the person of the Israelites, and partly by the descendants of Japheth in the islands and coasts of Asia Minor. As a matter of fact, the Canaanites were accursed both in their character—which was a shameful mixture of lust and cruelty—and in their religion, which reeked with degrading profligacy and atrocious rites in the worship of obscene Baalim.

There follows a blessing on the eldest son, Shem, and the youngest, Japheth. Shem is blessed through his covenant God.³

"Blessed be Yahveh, the God of Shem;
And let Canaan be his servant."

Here the blessing of Shem lies mainly in the fact that his descendants are the people and the worshipers of Yahveh. The blessing on Japheth is connected with a play upon his name:⁴

"God enlarge Japheth,
And let him dwell in the tents of Shem;
And let Canaan be his [or their] servant."

As it is not perfectly clear how Japheth "dwelt in the tents of Shem," some critics—as, for instance, Gesenius and Schrader—here gave to the word Shem the sense of "name" or "fame"—"Let him dwell in renowned tents." Probably, however, the allusion is to the friendly commerce and intercourse between the descendants of the two races. A deeper

¹ *Yayin* means both "wine" and "intoxication." I. Samuel i, 14, xxv, 37.

² As the curse was pronounced on Canaan, the son of Ham, and no curse is pronounced on Ham himself, there is an unsolved difficulty here. In verse 22, some versions read "Ham and Canaan saw." Others substitute Ham for Canaan in the curse (verses 25-27), or read "Ham, the father of Canaan," or in this verse (24) render "his younger son" by "grandson." None of these expedients are tenable, but the difficulty remains.

³ Compare Deuteronomy xxxiii, 20; Exodus xix, 5.

⁴ May Elohim enlarge (*yaphet*) Japheth (*yepheth*). *Yepheth* is the niphil form of *pathah*, "to open or extend."

meaning may be read into it in the light of such prophecies as that of Isaiah:¹ "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising . . . the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."²

The chapter ends with one of the chronological notices furnished by the Priestly writer that Noah lived 350 years after the flood, and died at the age of 950. Burekhardt says that, "The grave of the prophet Noah is still shown at the little village of Kerak, in the region of the Lebanon."³

CHAPTER X.

THE TABLE OF THE NATIONS.⁴

BEFORE drawing out the table of national affinity recorded in this chapter, a few remarks will give a clearer notion of its meaning and contents.

i. It is often called an ethnological table. This, however, is hardly correct. Many of the names are not those of persons but those of towns, like Sidon; or districts and countries, like Canaan and Mizraim; or peoples and tribes, like Ludim, Jebusites, etc.

ii. Nor is it, strictly speaking, an attempt at complete ethnography. It in no sense contains an exhaustive table even of the nations known to the Israelites. For instance, neither Arabians nor Persians are definitely named, nor Moabites, Edomites, Ishmaelites, nor does it mention people like the old Rephaim, Zuzim, Anakim, Emim, nor even the Amalekites—all of which tribes may have practically disappeared by the date when it was drawn up. That it should mention nations like the Hindoos, the Nigritian races, the Chinese, the North American Indians, and other nations more or less unknown to the Hebrews, was not to have been expected. But, although it mainly deals with peoples which inhabited the countries lying round the Mediterranean basin and northward to the Euxine, and eastward to the Caspian, and southward to the Persian Gulf, it was doubtless meant to counteract the Jewish tendency to bigoted particularism. It served to show that God is the God of all mankind—not only of the chosen people. It proved that, in the words of Saint Peter, "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him," and that, in the words of Saint Paul, "He hath made of one all nations of men. . . . If haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he is not far from each one of us," since, as the Greek poets had said, whom the Apostle of the Gentiles quotes with approval, "in him we live, and move, and have our being," and "we are also his offspring."

iii. The threefold division of the races of man has been very prominent. In a Babylonian legend Xisuthros had three sons whom the Sibylline oracles called Kronos, Titan, Japetos; and in the Persian legend Feridun has three sons Airya, Tûra, Cairima. Some modern philologists have also believed in three main divisions of the human race—the Aryan family, the Semitic, and the Turanian. The latter name has, however, an incorrect generalization for multitudes of scattered tribes and nations who can only be called Allophylian.

iv. The division of mankind here is certainly not by colors, as was the Egyptian, who separated the races of man into yellow (*Amu*), white (*Temchu*), and black (*Nahasi*).

v. Nor can much be inferred from the meaning of the designations. Shem means "name," *i. e.*, renown. It points to the noblest race, just as the Aryans, too, called themselves

¹ Isaiah lx, 3, 5.

² Compare Genesis xxii, 18; Ephesians iii, 6.

³ "Travels," I, 42; Kalisch, p. 231.

⁴ In this chapter, verses 1-7, 20, 22, 24, 31, 32 are supposed to belong to P and the rest to J.

for the word *arya*, "noble." Ham seems rather to mean "hot," than to be related to the Egyptian *Qemet*, "black," a name given to Egypt from the predominant color of its soil. What Japheth means is uncertain, since the play on words in ix, 27, is not an etymology. Shem, the ancestor of the Hebrews, is represented as the eldest, and Ham as the second. The Israelites came into contact with the Hamitic races and their culture before they had any close intercourse with the descendants of Japheth.

vi. It seems clear that the table is founded mainly on geographical, rather than on purely ethnic, facts. Japheth represents the Northern and Western belt of nations, which lie for the most part north of the Southern Iduric range—the highlands of Asia Minor, Armenia, and Media—except Lud and Arphaxad. The descendants of Ham occupy the southern belt, including parts of Africa, Arabia, and Egypt. The descendants of Shem occupy the central zone of civilization, including Assyria, Aram, Northern Mesopotamia, and Syria. There are, however, some cross divisions, depending on political or historic circumstances of migrations and conquests, so that some names—*e. g.*, Havilah and Sheba—occur twice over.

"This chapter," says Professor Sayce, "is not an ethnological table; it is not concerned with races, but with geography, arranged genealogically in accordance with Semitic idiom. Thus, when we are told that Sidon was 'the firstborn of Canaan,' we are to understand that it was the first of Phœnician cities. 'In this chapter' we are not to look for a scientific division of mankind into their several races. . . . All the tribes and nations mentioned belonged to the white race, which is, however, distinguished into several varieties. . . . In Biblical times, these various sub-races were mingled together in that square of the earth's surface which constituted the known world to the civilized peoples of the East. . . . It was the square which has witnessed the rise and growth of the civilization which mainly has an interest for us. . . . This square is divided into three zones—a Northern, a Central, and a Southern. The Northern zone is represented by Japheth, the central by Shem, and the Southern by Ham. In one direction, however, along the coast of Palestine, Egyptian conquest caused the Southern zone to be extended into the zone of the center."¹

vii. Since seventy of the descendants of Noah are mentioned, the Jews held that there were seventy nations of the world.

viii. The only passages which break the continuity of the table are the episode of Nimrod (verses 8-12), on which I will speak later; and the remark (verse 25) that Eber, the son of Salah, the son of Arphaxad, had two sons, Peleg and Joktan, and that Peleg, "division," was so called because "in his days the earth was divided." Since Salah means "propagation," and Peleg "divisions," some suppose the name to be mythical. What is meant by the "division" of the earth in the days of Peleg is uncertain; it may allude to the diffusion of population or the settlement of natural boundaries.² Eber means "he who crosses over," and the Hebrews (Genesis xiv, 13) were called "crossers over" because they had been originally a transeuphratic tribe. It is clear that this genealogical incident in the table of nations has not been influenced by any considerations of vanity, or the Jews would not have represented themselves as a mere sub-tribe in the family of the third son of Shem.

THE EPISODE OF NIMROD.³

(GENESIS X, 8 TO 12.)

J.

These verses are probably introduced from some other source into the table of nations. Nimrod, the son of Cush, is described as "a mighty man (or *gibbor* or 'hero') on the earth,"

¹ "The Higher Criticism and the Monuments," pp. 119-148; "Races of the Old Testament," pp. 41, ff.

² Peleg may also mean "water course," and some explain the allusion by "the first cuttings of the canals which are found in such numbers between the Tigris and the Euphrates."

³ Wellhausen attributes this episode to the Yahvist; Sayce to the Elohist. There is much uncertainty about its origin.

and as so eminent for prowess as a huntsman that the proverb said, "like Nimrod, the mighty hunter before the Lord."¹

From his being described as a son of Cush, and yet as a founder of Nineveh, some have supposed that, although the Assyrians and Babylonians spoke a Semitic language, their kingdom had been founded by a hero of the race of Ham, who pushed his conquest far into the region of Shem; but several modern critics and Assyriologists of high repute—among whom may be reckoned Schrader—think that the name Cush has led to a confusion between the father of Nimrod, and a Babylonian tribe with a similar name. This is, however, highly uncertain, and there seemed to have been both Assyrian and South Asiatic Cushites of kindred families. The government and culture of Babylonia appear to have been founded by a non-Semitic race, called Accadians and Sumerians, and the text preserves a true tradition of the fact that Assyria was originally a dependency of Babylon. Thus Nimrod founded Babylon, Erech (perhaps Ptolemy's Orchoe, now Warka, near the mound El-Assagah), Accad (Tel Nimroud), and Calneh (Ctesiphon) in the land of Shinar, before he founded a still vaster world-empire by carrying his victorious arms northward, and founding the four Assyrian States of Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah (now Kalah Shergat), and Resen (Nimroud, between Kalah Shergat and Kuyunjik). There is no certain derivation of the name Nimrod, nor has any trace of him been discovered in Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions, unless, with the late Mr. George Smith, we identify him with the legendary Izdubar; but Mr. Pinches seems to have proved that this view is no longer tenable.² The wild guesses of commentators connect him with Ninus, Orion, and other mythic heroes. The Hebrews connected his name with *maradh* "to revolt," and the Haggadah was very busy with his supposed evil deeds. He is identified by Josephus with the builder of Babel. Rabbinnic legends bring him down to the time of Abram, and, since Ur means "fire," they say that he flung Abram into the fire for not worshiping his idols, but that the patriarch was miraculously preserved. These stories have been transferred to the "Koran."

CHAPTER XI.

THE TOWER OF BABEL AND THE DISPERSION.

(GENESIS XI, 1 TO 9.)

J.

UP to this time the whole earth was of one language—"lip"—and one speech—"of words one"—and as the wandering tribes of men journeyed³ eastward⁴ they found a valley-plain—*bigah*—in the land of Shinar—Babylonian-Assyrian Sumer, *i. e.*, Southern Babylonia—which, from its advantageous position, tempted them to settle there. And they said to one another, "Come, let us bake bricks,⁵ and burn them thoroughly." They smeared the bricks with bitumen, which is abundant in the neighborhood, and proposed to build a very lofty tower.⁶ "Let us make us a name,"⁷ they said, "for we may perhaps be scattered over the

¹ Literally, before the face of Yahveh.

² George Smith, "Chaldean Account of the Genesis," pp. 167-262; "Records of the Past," vii, 133-149, *id.* v (new series), p. xiii.

³ The word implies "struck their tents," for they were as yet Nomads.

⁴ Not "from the East" (as in King James Version), but "East" (Revised Version).

⁵ The "bricks" (*l'benah*), so-called from their whiteness.

⁶ "With its top in the heavens"—an eastern hyperbole. Compare Deuteronomy i, 28, ix, 1; Daniel iv, 17.

⁷ Shem—some take it to mean a monument. Compare II. Samuel viii, 13.

THE WORLD AS KNOWN TO THE HEBREWS

ACCORDING TO THE MOSAIC ACCOUNT.



earth." But Yahveh came down to see the city and tower, which the children of men built, and said, "Behold, they are one people and have one language, and, if left unrestrained, they will be debarred from nothing. Come, let us go down and confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." So Yahveh scattered them, and they ceased to build, the city which was therefore called Babel—"confusion"—since Yahveh had there confounded the language of all the earth and scattered them abroad.

In verse 7, besides the bold phrase, we have again the plural "Go to, let us go down," on which I have already commented on Genesis i, 26. I still regard the expression as a "plural of excellence"; but it should be noted that neither the Rabbis nor the great Jewish commentators knew or accepted this explanation. In an interesting discussion between Rabbis and Christians¹ the Christians urge these plurals in proof of the Trinity. The answer of Rabbi Johanan was that God usually does nothing without consulting the supernal family, as in Daniel iv, 17: to which, however, we may oppose Isaiah xl, 12-14. Rav Jehuda said that God called ministering angels into existence to consult them.

Such is the short and naïvely anthropomorphic narrative in which the Yahvist touches incidentally on many great truths. The story of Babel is mentioned here alone in Scripture. It is meant to indicate that God did not intend men to remain as one undivided people using one form of speech. The divisions of mankind, alike by natural barriers of seas, rivers, and mountains, and by the growth of dialects and estranging customs, is part of the divine ordinance for the race. Although God has made all men of one, the separation of races tends to produce a rich variety and to give ample scope for the development of various endowments. It also saves man from the crushing burden of ambitious and overweening tyrannies. It tends to stir up the sluggish waves of human life, which otherwise might stagnate into universal putrescence. It breaks up the indolent immobility of custom. It stimulates every form of inquiry and of progress. It prevents men from exhausting the capabilities of limited areas by enabling them to avail themselves of the unlimited treasures and resources of the earth on which they dwell. It was, therefore, out of the highest beneficence that Yahveh defeated the little plans of men.

Another of the divine purposes is here intimated. It was to restrain the towering arrogance of mankind, lest, if they formed but a single race under some impious tyrant, they might altogether forget God, and rush into every extreme of impiety, relying on their own strength and worshipping their own inventions. A Babylonian conqueror might be tempted to say in his heart, "I will ascend up to heaven; above the stars of God, will I erect my throne,"² but God's answer to him would be the ignominious obliteration of his short-lived plans by death—"but thou descendest into the grave, and into the deepest pit." We find an echo of the same thought in Jeremiah: "I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up, and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall."³

To inculcate these lessons, the sacred writer adopts and modifies an ancient tradition. Although he does not here mention Nimrod, yet earliest Jewish legends attribute the attempt to found a world-empire to the mighty hunter whom they regarded as a rebel and a despot. Their imagination had been struck and haunted by the huge extent of Babylon, and the colossal towers of the temples of Bel-Merodach, both in that city and at Birs Nimroud. The latter, even in its fire-scathed ruins, excites the astonishment of travelers by its strength and vast extent. Even among the Babylonians there seems to have been a sense that there was something impious in the construction of buildings so gigantic.

The legend of its destruction by divine interposition—by storms of lightning—would take all the deeper root from the fact that even in ancient days the temple had been liable to

¹ Sanhedrim, 38b.

² Isaiah xiv, 13.

³ Jeremiah li, 44.

severe vicissitudes.¹ In later times "travelers saw in the vitrified bricks of the ruined tower, traces of the lightning, which had punished the pride of its builders."

Though no Babylonian inscription tells the story of the tower of Babel, Mr. George Smith has discovered, on the fragments of a tablet, allusions to a "holy mount mingled in Babylon by small and great," and how "the God in anger destroyed the secret designs of the builders," and "made strange their counsels" and scattered them.² The site of the great temple of Bel-Merodach in Babylon long retained the old Sumerian name of El Saggîl, "the house of the lofty head," which towered over the great city, visible from afar. With the splendor of the tower was connected the immense size of the city which naturally tempted the victorious despots of Assyria to dreams of a world-affrighting empire, so that even Sargon, after the conquest of Syria "appointed that all places should form a single kingdom." The wise diffusion of Semitic dialects made the dream seem feasible, and the promotion of the use of one language has always been the aim of tyrants. But it is not often entirely successful, and the "various races" which, as Berosus says, were gathered in Babylon told against it. The many languages spoken by representatives of conquered and immigrating races in Babylon made it natural to believe that it was the unfinished city which had been the scene of that confusion of tongues, when the original unity of speech among the descendants of Noah, after the deluge, was first confounded into mutually unintelligible languages.

For this reason the writer sees significance in the assonance of the name "Babel" with *balbél*, to confound, while at the same time the form of the story (verses 4, 5) seems to recognize the other derivation of the name from *Bab-ilu*, "The gate of the god."

In this passage, as throughout the Bible, our one concern is to seize the moral and spiritual lessons, whether conveyed in the forms of tradition, of myth, or of parable. To take this story literally would be—as was said by St. Gregory of Nyssa, "The theologian," fifteen centuries ago—"Jewish babblement and folly." To use the legend as decisive authority on questions concerning the origin of languages is to take the things of science and give them to Scripture. If the question of the origin of languages can ever be solved at all, it will only be by scientific inquiry. The notion—idly deduced from this passage—that Hebrew was the primitive language is now absolutely exploded, and cannot be held by anyone capable of understanding even the elements of philology. Still more certain it is that the divergence of languages and dialects, as far back as we can trace it on the oldest monuments of the human race, was not the result of a momentary interposition—which, indeed, is not asserted by the writer—but arose from the slow working of age-long laws.

THE GENERATIONS FROM NOAH TO ADAM.

MAINLY P.

(GENESIS XI, 10 TO 32.)

The following genealogy records all that we know of the history of 390 years according to the Hebrew, 1040 years according to the Samaritan, and 1270 according to the Septuagint. The genealogy is constructed on exactly the same principles as that given by the Priestly writer in chapter v.

How little we can be sure of the numbers may be seen from the interpolation of the name Canaan by the Septuagint, and the variations tabulated below, which are clearly due to intentional manipulation. In addition to this the readings of the Septuagint are often variant and uncertain :

¹ It was restored by Nebuchadnezzar. For a modern description see Layard, "Nineveh and Babylon," pp. 484-505.

² See Sayce, "The Higher Criticism and the Monuments," pp. 153-157; George Smith, "Chaldean Genesis," ed. Sayce, pp. 120, ff.; but nothing is said of the confusion of tongues.

	HEBREW.			SAMARITAN.			SEPTUAGINT.		
	Before birth of son.	Rest of life.	Total.	Before birth of son.	Rest of life.	Total.	Before birth of son.	Rest of life.	Total.
Shem	100	500	600	100	500	600	100	500	600
Arphaxad	35	403	438	135	303	438	135	400	535
Canaan							130	330	460
Salah	30	403	433	130	303	433	130	330	460
Eber	34	430	464	134	270	404	134	270	404
Peleg	30	209	239	130	109	239	130	209	339
Reu	32	207	239	132	107	239	132	207	339
Serug	30	200	230	130	100	230	130	200	330
Nahor	29	119	148	79	69	148	179	125	304
Terah	70	135	205	70	75	145	70	135	205
Total	390			1040			1270		

The object of the changes introduced by the Septuagint is easily discernible. (1) The Greek translators desired to make ten generations from Shem to Terah by inserting the name Canaan, which is also inserted in Luke iii, 36, and (2) to extend the number of years required for the ten generations. How entirely artificial is the number of years thus stated appears at once from the fact that the three numbers which belong to Salah are transferred without any change to Canaan. The insertion is clearly wrong, for Abram, like Noah, is evidently meant to be in the tenth generation. The Samaritan variations are also systematic. This version increases the number of years before the birth of the first son, except in the case of Terah, and decreases the number of years lived by each patriarch after the birth of the first son except in the case of Shem. In the third column it agrees with the Hebrew, except in the cases of Eber and Terah. All three texts are in accord as regards Shem, but the Septuagint alone gives the years of Canaan. The lists mark a gradual diminution in the length of human life.

It was the custom of the Hebrew genealogists to throw their lists into equal numbers. Thus the genealogy of Joseph in Saint Matthew is arranged in groups of fourteen, and there are ten generations from Adam to Noah in Genesis v, 3-32.

In this genealogy, as in the former, the name seems sometimes to represent districts or towns, with the tribes which inhabited them, rather than individuals. Arphaxad, Reu, and Serug seem to be names which represent places, although their identification is far from certain. Arphaxad (x, 22) is identified by some critics with the district of the Karduchi, which Ptolemy calls Arrapachitis; Reu with Rages in Media, or Edessa, or Rughwa in Arabia, or with Ruua mentioned by Tiglath-Pileser III., as a town in South Babylonia; Serug with the blooming district of Sarug in North Mesopotamia. But these identifications scarcely arise above the dignity of dubious guesses, nor is any further light to be obtained for the names. Salah is connected with a word for “shoot,” in Canticles¹ iv, 13. Eber “one who crosses over”;² Peleg, “division”; Reu, “friendship”; Serug, “intertwining”; Nahor, “earnest struggle”; Terah, “wandering”; Abram, “high father.”

So little is certain about these questions that Bunsen supposed these names merely to indicate the chief resting places of the Hebrew branch of the Semitic tribes from Arphaxad to Northwestern Mesopotamia, and the numbers to represent the years of their abode in those regions.

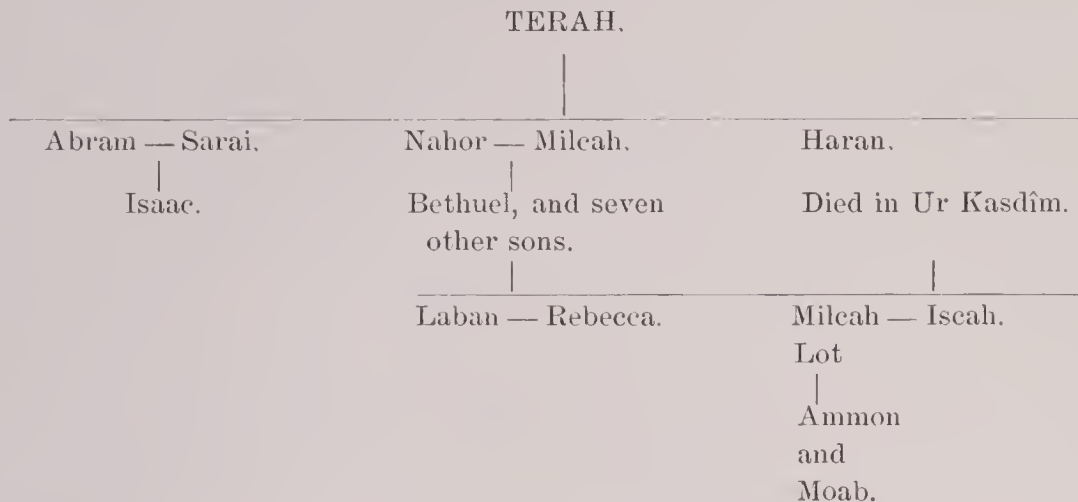
Only one thing is deducible from this genealogy, and the uncertainties by which it is surrounded; namely, that, for ten generations after the flood, from Shem to Terah, the Hebrews

¹ Song of Solomon. ² Joshua xxiv, 2, 14.

had no glimmer of definite tradition respecting the lives of their ancestors. Their history began with the migration of Terah from Haran to Ur, and of Abram from Ur to Canaan.

THE GENEALOGY OF TERAH.

We now come to the last prelude to that long period of Hebrew history which begins with Abram. It is prefaced by a brief genealogy to show his immediate relations.



When we are introduced to Terah, he is living at Ur of the Chaldees — Ur Kasdîm — where his third son, Haran, has already pre-deceased his father. This is the first recorded instance, except the murder of Abel, of the natural death of a son before his father. It is for this reason that attention is specially called to the fact. But Haran, before his death, had become the father of a son, Lot, of whom the subsequent history will have so much to tell, and of two daughters, Milcah and Iscah.

Speculation has been busy with the names. "Milcah," says Professor Sayce, "is the Babylonian Milcat or 'queen.' It may be that in the curious addition 'and the father of Iscah' we have a marginal gloss, which indicates acquaintance on the part of the writer with cuneiform literature. Iscah is not only not mentioned again, but the name is without an etymology. But in the cuneiform syllabary the same character may be read indifferently *mil* and *is*; and quite recently the first decipherer of the Tel el-Amarna tablets read *is-ku*, instead of *mil-ku*, 'king,' in a proper name. What has occurred in the nineteenth century may easily have occurred before, and it is therefore quite possible that Iscah may owe her existence to an error in reading a cuneiform character."¹ Iscah is certainly mentioned in an unusual way, and it is strange that there should be no further allusion to her, whereas Milcah, by marriage with her uncle Nahor, became the mother of eight sons. We are not told who is the mother of Sarai. She is called "the daughter-in-law of Terah"; but as she was also his daughter,² some have supposed that she is identical with Iscah,³ and that daughter in Genesis xx, 12, means granddaughter. This is the view of Josephus, the Targum of Jonathan, the Talmudists, of Ephraem Syrus, and of Saint Jerome. But the view is untenable; for, since Sarai was only ten years younger than Abram⁴ she could hardly have been the daughter of his younger brother. Ewald conjectures that Iscah became the wife of Lot. The derivation of Sarai is doubtful; Sarah means "princess."⁵

Since it is at Ur Kasdîm — "Ur of the Chaldees" — that we find the first clear traces of the family of Abram, great interest attaches to the identification of the site. Kasdim is the

¹ Sayce, "The Higher Criticism and the Monuments," p. 159.

² Genesis xx, 12.

³ "Iscah" is another name for Sarai, because she spoke intuitively by the Holy Spirit (from *Sakah* "to perceive"). See Genesis xxi, 12; Megillah, xxx, 14a.

⁴ xvii, 17.

⁵ Gesenius makes Sarai equivalent to "nobleness"; Delitzsch and Ewald take it to mean "quarrelsome."

name by which the Hebrews called the Babylonians, but which they themselves never used. The word Chaldee — which is from the tribe Kalda to which Merodach Baladan, and perhaps Nebuchadnezzar himself, belonged — has no connection with the word. Its origin is unknown, though it may be from the Assyrian *Kasidu* “conqueror,” or from Kassî, an old name by which the Babylonians were known.¹

From the fact that “Ur” means “fire” in Hebrew arose the legend (already alluded to) that Abram had been saved from the burning fiery furnace into which he was thrown by Nimrod for refusing to worship his idols. But the word is the Babylonian Ur, *Uru*, or “city” of the cuneiform text. And the site is now represented by the mound of Mugheir and Warka, on the western bank of the Euphrates, which had a famous temple of the Moon-god.² The Jews believed Ur to be Edessa which they, therefore, called Orcastun, a corruption of Ur Kasdîm.

Terah, accompanied by his eldest son Abram,³ his grandson Lot, and Sarai, who was at once his daughter and daughter-in-law, left Ur Kasdîm to go into the land of Canaan. It is clear that his second son Nahor, with his family, must also have accompanied them for they are found settled in Haran in the next generation.⁴ They are not here mentioned because their former relations with the family of Abram were not always friendly, and because they did not share in the final migration to Canaan.

What was the cause of Terah’s migration? We are not told. Some find it in the death of his son Haran; others in religious disputes; others again in the necessity which arose from the growth of population, and the failure of sufficient nourishment for ever-increasing flocks and herds. No hint is given that Terah had received any divine intimation on the subject, such as was subsequently given to Abram, whose faith in obeying it, and “going forth, not knowing whither he went”⁵ made him “the father of missionaries.” At first, however, the emigrants — on whose fortunes were to depend, in God’s providence, the future religious destinies of the world — did not get as far as their ultimate destination, the Land of Canaan. “They came to Haran, and dwelt there.”

We are not told what caused them to stop on their way. It is probable that Abram’s impressions as to the will of God were still dim. The providence of God is everlasting, as well as unresting. All things were being prepared for the time prescribed by him to whom alone the times and seasons are manifest.

Haran is unquestionably the Carrhæ of the ancients.⁶ It is on the river Balissus — Belik — twenty miles southeast of Edessa. The name means “the dry” or “parched,” in Accadian, “a road” — and the treeless unwatered plain might seem to offer few attractions. Its condition may, however, have been very different in past ages, and it was an important commercial center to which converged the great caravan routes to Nisibis, to Babylon, and to Syria, for which reason Alexander the Great occupied it with a Macedonian colony.⁷ It was celebrated for the worship of the Moon-goddess, and its ruins are still visited by pilgrims from its connection with the history of the great patriarch. It was at Haran that Abram received a distinct and final intimation that he was to leave his country, and the place of his birth, and his father’s house, and go into the unknown land of which God should tell him.⁸ He had, however, received a previous intimation while he lived at Ur. Such at least is the view of Saint Stephen, who, in his speech, says “the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said, ‘Get thee out of thy land.’ . . . Then came he

¹ Sayce, “The Higher Criticism and the Monuments,” p. 158.

² Sayce, “The Higher Criticism and the Monuments,” p. 158. The identification is, however, disputed. See Kalisch, pp. 292-293. *Mugheir* means “mother of bitumen.”

³ Abram “the father is lofty”; compare Abiram and the Assyrian Abaramu.

⁴ Genesis xxiv, 10, xxvii, 43.

⁵ Hebrews xi, 8.

⁶ Professor Sayce calls it “the key of the highway from the East to the West.”

⁷ See references to Haran in II. Kings xix, 12; Isaiah xxxvii, 12; Ezekiel xxvii, 23.

⁸ Genesis xii, 1; Acts vii, 2-4.

out of the land of the Chaldeans [Ur Kasdîm] and dwelt in Haran; and from thence, when his father was dead, God removed him into this land where ye now dwell.”¹ In these details Saint Stephen was no doubt adopting the ordinary Jewish tradition. The statement, however, that Abram did not leave Haran till Terah was dead does not agree with the data here given.² For the writer tells us that Terah, before he died in Haran, attained the age of 205 years. His death is only here mentioned, because at this point he disappears from the sacred page. But since Terah was only seventy years old when Abram was born, and Abram was seventy-five when he left Haran,³ it is clear that Terah must have lived sixty years after Abram’s departure. He must have survived not only till the birth and circumcision of Ishmael,⁴ but must even have lived until Isaac, the son of the promise, was thirty-five years old.⁵ It must be remembered that he was not left in loneliness. If the families of Abram and of his dead son Haran left him, the numerous descendants of Nahor were still around him and were prospering in their new home.

“But Sarai was barren; she had no child.”⁶ That was for many years to come the tragedy of Abram’s life. In the East it is regarded as a very real tragedy, and to Abram it must have been intensified by the necessary temptation to regard as delusions the immense hopes for the future of his race, which he had received from divine intimations. Well might he cry to God, “Oh, that Ishmael might live before thee!” when he had already attained the age of 100 years, and still found himself without a legitimate heir. But in God’s due time “the child of the promise” was marvelously born, to become the ancestor, in direct line, of him who was the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

And meanwhile Abram listened to that divine voice which in the depths of his being said to him, “Follow me,” and his faith became to him, for many a long year, “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” He was “the father of missionaries,” and the hero of faith, because, having been thereto called by God, he “obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went,” and “by faith sojourned in tents as in a strange country,” looking for “the city which hath the foundations, of which the builder and maker is God.”⁷ “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God.”⁸

At this point, then, we close the meager record of prehistoric ages. From this epoch through the varying phases of divine revelation we are called to watch more closely and consecutively that “path of the just,” which is “as the shining light,” shining “more and more unto the perfect day.”

¹ Acts vii, 2-4.

² But Saint Stephen may very possibly have followed the text of the LXX., which alters 205 in Genesis xi, 32, into 145, as does Philo, “De Migr. Abr.,” p. 414. Josephus, “Antiquities” I, vii, 2, quotes from Nicholas of Damascus the legend that Abraham conquered Damascus and reigned there. He says there was still a village near Damascus called “The Habitation of Abraham.”

³ Genesis xii, 4.

⁴ Genesis xvi, 16, xvii, 25.

⁵ Genesis xxi, 5.

⁶ This positive and negative statement of the same fact for purposes of emphasis is characteristic of archaic and Eastern languages. Compare Genesis xlii, 2, “That we may live, and not die.” So, too, in Isaiah xxxviii, 1; Judges xiii, 2.

⁷ Hebrews xi, 8-10.

⁸ James ii, 23.

Frederic W. Farrar.

BOOK III.

FROM THE CALL OF ABRAHAM TO THE BONDAGE OF ISRAEL.

BY

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BOOK III.

FROM THE CALL OF ABRAHAM TO THE BONDAGE OF ISRAEL.

CHAPTER I.

ABRAHAM—HIS BIRTH AND TRAINING.

WE come now to some account of Abraham, who is the grandest historical representative of the patriarchal world. He was the son of Terah, of whom there is scarcely more than a bare mention in the Scriptures. He was born in Ur or Hur. This was a city of Chaldea, situated on the right bank of the Euphrates at the point where the river at that time emptied into the sea. In other words, it was a seaport town, and there is abundant evidence that its shipping was of considerable importance, and that by means of it Chaldea had important intercourse with Ethiopia and other distant parts of the ancient world. It is probable, however, that the name was applied, not only to the town, but to a considerable portion of the territory surrounding it. Nor is it probable from the Scripture narrative that Terah dwelt within the limits of the city proper, unless he sought the protection of the city walls at night. It is altogether probable that the business of Terah, like that of Abraham after him, was pastoral. Nor is it unlikely that the growth of population, in and around Ur, the pressure of people on the lands of that region adapted to grazing and tillage, constituted the first motive to migration. Seemingly he had heard of a country far to the westward that was fertile and better suited to his occupation.

The men who had visited distant parts, by sea or land, the caravans that had come up through Palestine from the Mediterranean coast, would be likely to bring such reports. These accounts appealed to the imagination of one who saw his occupation dwindling in the home field, and, like many another since his time acting from a like impulse, he gathered his family and his goods and chattels together, and, turning his face to the west, set forth to seek his fortune in a new land. It is impossible now to tell by what road he traveled. Judging from the general configuration of the country, if he ascended the Euphrates by its right bank he would have encountered a series of morasses that would have rendered progress almost impossible. If, on the other hand, he crossed over to the left bank he must have found a better road that would take him past many large and populous towns. But, by whatever road he went, he came at length to the plain of Haran, a broad and level tract of country bounded by the mountains at the north of Babylon, and begirt by streams that flow into the Tigris and Euphrates. It was a fertile country, described to-day as a boundless plain, "strewn at times with patches of the brightest flowers, at other times with rich and green pastures, covered with flocks of sheep and goats feeding together, here and there a few camels, and the son or daughter of their owner tending them. One can quite understand how the sons of this open country, the Bedouins, love it, and cannot leave it—no other soil would suit them. The air is so fresh, the horizon is so far, and man feels so free, that it seems made for those whose life it is to roam at pleasure, and who own allegiance to none but to themselves." It is not strange that Terah

should have found his migratory spirit satisfied in such a country, and that he should have abandoned the purpose with which he set out of going into Canaan. At all events this became the terminus of his wandering. Here he pitched his tent, hither he drew the other members of his family, and the place became for many decades after his death the ancestral abode of those to whom the Hebrew name belonged. They went to work evidently to make this a permanent home. To this day the well is in constant use down whose steps Rebekah tripped, in her maiden freshness and beauty, to draw water for the camels of Abraham's servant. One can figure to himself now the happy pastoral life that absorbed the energies of Terah and his sons. The years came and went, and flocks and herds, children and servants, were multiplied to them until they became both rich and powerful. But in due course the sands of Terah's life ran out, and he was gathered to his fathers. Then came a change. The ties that hitherto had bound Abraham to Haran were sundered. He had discharged his duty as a son, and he was now at liberty to enter upon the work to which he was moved by a divine impulse.

But before proceeding with this part of our narrative let us consider the influences—religious and otherwise—under which the patriarch had been reared. The people of Chaldea were for the most part Cushites. There was, however, a pretty large admixture of other elements. The fertility of the soil, the peaceable character of the inhabitants, and their maritime connections with other parts of the world, made possible important accessions from without. The population had probably come in originally from the north, following the courses of the great rivers and attracted by the fertility of the soil. No such fertility is known elsewhere in the wide world. The descriptions given of it by Herodotus and other ancient writers almost surpass belief. "The blade of the wheat plant and the barley plant is often four fingers in breadth." We are told that it was customary to mow the wheat fields twice and then keep down the growth of the stalk and promote the growing of the grain by pasturing cattle upon them. Even to this day, notwithstanding the encroachments of the desert sand and the consequent changes of the climate, the fertility is enormous. Under such conditions wealth increased, population multiplied, and the arts flourished. Existing ruins of great cities attest the opulence and refinement of the people. The traces are still found of vast temples, magnificent palaces, and even of libraries, the books of the latter composed not of perishable paper or parchment but of imperishable tiles. Artistic taste reached a high order of development. Much attention was given to science, especially astronomy, which the remarkable clearness of the skies and the brilliancy of the heavenly bodies greatly stimulated and promoted. The civilization was an attractive one. It excites our interest even at this late stage of the world's development. No wonder that men were drawn to it from different quarters, or that they were led to adopt its customs and even its religion. At least one great Semitic family was there, and it is most unlikely that they were the only representatives of the race. It is impossible to tell how far Terah and his descendants had taken on the color of the life of the people among whom they dwelt, and how far the process of assimilation had gone with them. But there are certain hints scattered here and there in the Sacred Scriptures from the Book of Genesis to the Epistles, as well as certain traditions, that seem to indicate that not only Terah, but even Abraham, had adopted the Chaldean religion.

That religion was elaborately polytheistic. The number of gods in the pantheon was almost beyond computation. The leading divinities were divided into triads. The most important triad, though not, perhaps, the oldest, was that in which the gods corresponded to the heavenly bodies, the Sun-god, the Moon-god, and the gods of the planetary system. But these deities were supplemented by a multitude of local divinities. Whether this religion had a spiritual principle behind it or not it is impossible to say. Most likely it had. Possibly there were sages and priests among the people who understood this principle and could expound it, and who saw in the elaborate machinery of the popular cult a shadow of the one omnipresent

and infinite Deity. But whatever the religion originally was, or whatever it then was in the thought of a few favored individuals, it had certainly greatly deteriorated. It was materialistic, gross, and abominably corrupt. Even in its best phases it was little more than an elaborate system of fetichism and magic, while the corrupt practices it sanctioned and promoted were revolting to every principle of decency and could but excite loathing in every soul that was naturally refined. This was unquestionably the effect produced in the mind of Abraham. His powerful genius, moreover, penetrated the disguises that religion had taken on. He went, by a divine instinct, to the very root of the matter. Behind all the gross and material manifestations of deity he saw the infinite and abiding reality. How far he went in affirming his conviction we cannot say. Whether he succeeded in impressing his views upon the members of his family we do not know. It is likely that to some extent he did. It is as likely as not that this may have been one of the principal considerations that induced Terah to leave the land of Ur and that drew after him his other children. Certainly we can readily perceive that the rôle of a religious reformer could not have been an easy one in that age and time. It is scarcely too much to affirm that to reform a religion so gross and sensual as the religion of the Chaldeans was an impossibility. To make the attempt would involve the destruction of the reformer, without making any permanent impression on the minds of his contemporaries. There was but one way open, and that was by separation, and building up from the bottom the religion that was pure and undefiled. This was the way chosen by the great man who has long been regarded by many nations and peoples as the "father of the faithful" and the real founder of monotheism.

I have already intimated that Abraham probably came by the monotheistic notion by the clearness of his own reasoning. His own rational thought carried him irresistibly to the idea of Infinite Personality. Still, there were other elements in this remarkable conversion, if we may so term it, that should not be overlooked. Abraham and his family were descended from Shem, through Eber. Hence the name Hebrew. Their habits of life were nomadic and pastoral. Such a people would be likely to preserve their traditions. While, therefore, they did take on some of the superstitions of the period and adopt some evil practices from the nations with whom they came in contact, it is not likely that they wholly abandoned their earlier conceptions and modes of worship. The thought, that God was accessible to human approach, may have been — we may not go astray if we affirm that it was — still preserved in some vague way, at least, in the minds of the people. So that when Abraham was carried by his own clear and exalted vision to the conviction of the one God, it was but natural that he should seek to talk with him face to face. Here it was that he was lifted high above all the grosser forms of thought and practice. Then it was that God became to him a veritable and living presence, and that he could hold distinct and real communion with him. Then it was that God's voice became audible and his commandment sure. It is this, too, that separates Abraham so widely from his own time, and makes him seem to be in sympathy with every time. We cannot conceive of him as having anything in common with those old superstitious and idol-worshipping Chaldeans. He is to us as much a man of the nineteenth century as a man of the age more than two thousand years before the advent of Jesus. Nor can we think of a time so far advanced in civilization, either that men will cease to be interested in the story of Abraham, or fail to be inspired by the lofty lessons of his character. Such as he was, however, he owed in part to his training, in part to his wonderful native endowment, making him one of the most extraordinary souls that the history of the world has developed, and, in part, to the fact that God had chosen him as the instrument for the most momentous revelation that the human race has received from heaven.

CHAPTER II.

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM.

SOME writers speak of Abraham as receiving two calls, one while he dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees, and the other in Haran after the death of his father. If we confine ourselves to the account that is given in Genesis there appears to be but one. Indeed, the migration from Ur is attributed wholly to Terah, and Abraham is included in it as a dutiful son. But Stephen in his speech before the Council said: "The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran." The call appears to have been to Abraham and not to Terah. How, then, do we account for the statement that Terah conducted the migration? The explanation is very simple if we keep in mind the patriarchal institution. Theoretically Terah, the oldest male member, was the head of the group. As long as he lived everything must be done in his name. Abraham, by reason of his superior intelligence, his greater bodily vigor, and by reason of certain priestly functions which he had begun to exercise, may have come to have a dominating influence in the family. It may have been that Terah had already passed completely under the domination of his will. It may have been that he had come to share the religious convictions of his son. All these things are not only possible, but probable. So that we must regard Abraham as the immediate cause of the impulse that was to take that great body of Semitic people away from Chaldean influences. It seems, too, that Canaan was the point of destination at the outset. If that were so, why should they have dwelt so long a time in Haran? Evidently that was a part of the divine plan. From the merely human side, we are at liberty to adopt a variety of considerations. The advanced age and consequent infirmity of Terah would have been a sufficient reason. It was only a filial duty incumbent upon Abraham to tarry in the fertile plains of Haran until his aged father had completed his earthly pilgrimage. Nahor, the elder brother of Abraham, and who, as the elder brother, had broken off from the patriarchal establishment of Terah and become the head of a new family, did not form a part of the original caravan that passed up to the north. But later on, moved perhaps by favorable reports that came to him from his kinsmen, as well as by the restless desire for change that so often takes possession of nomadic peoples, he followed them to their new pasture ground. Abraham, moreover, may have felt it necessary for his great enterprise that he should increase his possessions, that his flocks and herds should have time to multiply, and that he should have opportunity to increase his retinue, surrounding himself with menservants and maidservants, who would be obedient to his will. But it seems to me that the most conspicuous reason of all, as well as the most providential, was to establish a permanent abode for his kinspeople and their descendants in Haran. The most important, the most imperative injunction that was laid upon the Hebrew race, after the injunctions of their religion, was that they should preserve the purity of their descent. Under no circumstances were they to take to themselves wives from the people of the land, but they were to go back to their ancestral seats and take their wives from the same unpolluted stock. Ethnologically this undoubtedly is the reason that has made the Hebrew race one of the most distinct types of the entire human family; that, through all vicissitudes of migration and suffering, has preserved their characteristics unchanged and enabled them to resist all attempts at assimilation.

All this is related to a most important part of the call. "I will make of thee a great nation." The departure from Ur, and again from Haran, had national significance. He was going forth to possess the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it. He was going forth not only to lay the foundations of a great family, but to multiply his descendants until they should be like the stars of heaven and the sands of the seashore for multitude. Now, as

we look forward from this period and take in at a glance the whole of Hebrew history, and especially as we observe how this history fits into and is related to the subsequent movements of civilized races, we shall have little difficulty in recognizing how much this call implied, first, with reference to the constitution of the family, and, secondly, with reference to the more complicated organization of national life. Of course, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the patriarchal system of the Hebrews was developed in a time when polygamy was the almost universal custom, and that immediately preceding this there was a period of great laxity and even of promiscuity in the relations of the sexes. We are obliged to confess, not without sorrow, that both Abraham and Jacob shared to some extent in the polygamous practices of their time. Still, one cannot read the Bible story with care without perceiving that the divine intention, in all the dealings with these great founders of a race and a religion, was to exalt the importance in the family of one woman, chosen in holy love, to be the lawful mother of children and to control the destinies of the household. Nothing can be clearer than the providential design that the true succession, both social and spiritual, was to be through Sarah and, to an important extent, through Rachel. This is the more mysterious if we remember that in that age, and under institutions as they then existed, motherhood counted for little in determining the relationship of children; that adoption was almost as common and sacred a mode of filiation as birth. Thus it appears that it was the mission of the patriarchs to be the indorsers of monogamy as well as the founders of monotheism.

But the family was not to be in itself a finality. The family was to be purified and exalted because it was to become the primal unit in a larger and more important organism. The grandest results of civilization were to be attained through civil institutions. Accordingly the Hebrews themselves were to become a great and powerful commonwealth. If we had nothing but Jewish history before us, and were to confine our thoughts to the part which the Jewish nation played under David and Solomon, and even in later epochs, we should say that the call of Abraham and all the patriarchs was worth while. But the highest functions of the Israelites were not discharged in the realization and fulfillment of their own national existence. Indeed, the special divine functions for which God raised them up only began then. We need only to recall the teaching of Jesus that relationship to Abraham is not a fleshly relationship, and that God is able of the stones to raise up seed unto Abraham, to understand that Aryan as well as Semitic peoples may come into vital contact with the father of the faithful. We are wont to attribute our civic descent to the Roman empire. Rome in some respects reached the perfection of organization. Her institutions are the marvel of the world, and nearly all our institutions to-day are modeled on hers. This is so apparent that it is not strange that some of the wisest observers have concluded that the Bible story has no lesson for the student of constitutional law or the social philosopher in our time. No greater mistake than this, however, is possible. Notwithstanding its magnificent formal perfection, Roman civilization was fatally at fault in the laxity of the family bond. This is conceded to be one of the causes of the corruption that rendered the downfall of the nation inevitable. Nor can we obscure the fact that when the reconstruction of Roman society took place through the instrumentality of the Christian Church, the work was rendered indestructible by the exaltation and purification of the family, following the pattern furnished in the patriarchal age, and laying down the commandment given to Moses and reiterated by Jesus and the apostles, "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee." Whatever hope the great nations of Europe and America may cherish of permanence is largely based upon the sacredness of the family. The family is the source of all our civic virtues. The protection of the family, moreover, is in no small degree the motive of all civic arrangements. Thus the call of Abraham reaches forward, and includes not only the Hebrew commonwealth but the greater nations and peoples whose multitudes are so vast that no man can number them.

CHAPTER III.

FROM HARAN TO CANAAN—ABRAHAM AND LOT—SODOM.

THE time having arrived through the death of Terah and through the strengthening of the family by long residence in the rich pasture grounds of Haran, and the call having been repeated with the blessing, Abraham took his departure for the land that was to be the scene of his future movements and with which his name was henceforth forever to be associated. What would the world give if it could but know the route over which he traveled! But that is impossible. There is room only for conjecture. If the desert then bore any resemblance to the desert of to-day, to have taken that vast company of human beings and live stock—the sheep, goats, cattle, asses, and camels—such as a rich and powerful chieftain of the plains would naturally take with him, would have been an impossible feat. Of course, it is possible that the wilderness was not as desolate then as now. We know that mighty armies from Chaldea, Babylonia, and Assyria were wont to cross it by the shortest way, and we can scarcely understand how it was accomplished unless both water and forage were more abundant in that region then than now. But the difficulties presented by the desert to even a great army were not as formidable as those that were offered to a caravan like that of the patriarch, made up not only of men, women, and children, but of immense herds of live stock that must be sustained by the way. An army would make its journey with as light an equipment as possible, and it would carry a considerable stock of provisions with it. It could go by forced marches from one oasis to another, or from one well of water to another. It would be composed of men and horses, hardened by military service to the endurance of fatigue and famine. If any perished by the way, according to the barbarous standards of the time, their carcasses could be left without compunction for the vultures to feed upon. All the conditions were different with a patriarchal group and its belongings. Here hasty movement was impossible, and the utmost care must be exercised, both to preserve the flocks and herds and to protect the lives of women and children. It, therefore, appears to be wholly out of the question that Abraham, in his departure from Haran, could have taken his way directly across the desert, even though the drifting sands had not wrought such complete havoc with vegetation as is the case at present. From Haran to Damascus in a direct line it is nearly 300 miles. From the ford of Thapsacus on the Upper Euphrates to the oasis of Tadmor, afterward the site of the city of Palmyra, it was forty miles over a blistering desert, without a spear of grass or a drop of water to mitigate the terror of the journey. It is likely, therefore, that the patriarch would keep along the edge of the foothills of northern Syria until he reached the mountainous regions lying east of Phœnicia and Palestine, and then approach Damascus by a more directly southern route. This, if the proper season of the year were chosen, would afford pasturage by the way and involve little hazard to the lives of either people or cattle.

There is some reason for supposing that Damascus was the first prolonged halting place of the caravan. According to Josephus, tradition assigns to Abraham a protracted residence in Damascus. But there is almost no evidence to support the tradition. Indeed, the evidence of the Scripture account is the other way. We have, to be sure, mention of Eliezer of Damascus as the steward of Abraham's house. This would almost imply that Abraham had remained long enough in Damascus to acquire the services of Eliezer. That, however, does not count for much. From the Scripture narrative it appears to be indisputable that, within about a year from the time he left Haran, Abraham was in Egypt. For it was during his visit to Egypt that Sarah acquired possession of Hagar. After having had her as a handmaid for ten years

she gave her to Abraham to wife. Eleven years after Abraham left Haran, or when he was eighty-six years old, Ishmael was born. In view of these facts the stay in Damascus could not have been much more than a long halt. From Damascus it is altogether probable he passed to the south, keeping the Sea of Galilee on the west, and, crossing the Jordan some seven or eight miles farther south, went, by what is still the common route of travel, into Samaria and came to Sichem or Shechem. "And Abraham passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the Lord appeared unto Abraham, and said, unto thy seed will I give this land: and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him." The place of Shechem is a contracted but beautiful and fertile valley, 1,800 feet above the level of the sea, between the mountains of Ebal on the north and Gerizim on the south. Moreh, however the name is derived, was a clump or grove of oak trees which flourished, as we know by later references, for many years in that spot. Here the patriarch builded an altar and performed his worship. Notwithstanding that he recognized Jehovah as the one and only God, he had not outgrown the disposition which so often appears in primitive worshipers to perform their service in sacred groves; and to Jacob no less than to Abraham the oaks of Moreh were sacred.

What must have been the feeling of the patriarch as he looked about and saw all the land that had been given by divine promise to his seed. "The Canaanite was then in the land." A race of people akin to those from whom he had departed in Chaldea had possession of the territory. Yet, notwithstanding the promise, Abraham did not seek to dispossess them. Neither did the Canaanites endeavor to drive him out. We wonder somewhat at this, but it is to be accounted for in part at least by the fact that ownership in lands did not signify in the ancient time anything like what it signifies with us. Indeed, except in cities and places that were densely populated, there probably was no such thing as land ownership. Pastoral peoples only required space to feed their flocks, and they moved about in doing this from one pasture ground to another as the season changed, or as one ground after another became exhausted. So long, therefore, as Abraham did not interfere with any other man's pasturage, he could come and go without molestation. In addition to this, Dean Stanley assigns a profound spiritual reason for the fact that Abraham and the succeeding patriarchs possessed the land only by promise. He thinks this was the training by which they were made to perceive, partially and dimly, to be sure, something of the spiritual attributes of man and the spiritual nature of God. Dr. A. P. Peabody thinks this promise of a national existence, which was iterated and reiterated from the time of Abraham until the final establishment of the commonwealth of Israel, was made to fill the same place in the Hebrew mind that the prospect and promise of a life beyond the grave fills in the mind of the Christian believer. Thus, the promise of the land as far as the eye could see, from the rising of the sun until the going down thereof, yet never really owning a foot of it, except such as was purchased for a sepulcher, became for Abraham and his successors the enduring pledge of divine oversight. It was the serene trust displayed in this promise, that made Jesus declare: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad."

But let us turn again to the more secular aspects of the history. The record says that "Abram took Sarai, his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came." We notice the intimate relation between Lot and Abraham. At first it would almost seem that Lot was included in the call and promise. But his relationship to the migration must be accounted for on other grounds. Lot was the son of an older brother of Abraham who had died in Ur of the Chaldees. Like his father he had remained a member of the household of Terah, and likewise of Abraham's after he came into the patriarchal succession. Thus, Abraham speaks of him sometimes as his

brother, sometimes as his brother's son, or nephew, and sometimes as his son. In the patriarchal times these various relations were often confused and blended. It is evident, however, that Lot held a place of considerable independence and dignity. He is spoken of as sharing in the wealth of Abraham. Probably anticipating the time when he should go out and become the head of a house for himself, he had been permitted to acquire in his own right many different forms of oriental wealth. Still, he and his uncle worked harmoniously together. In every secular enterprise they seem to have made common cause. They were one in the purpose to go into the land of Canaan. It almost seems as if Abraham regarded Lot as a partner in the great religious movement to which he had been called. But whatever may have been the earlier feelings of the younger man, as time wore on his devotion to his own private and selfish ends waxed stronger and stronger. At length, after the return of the two from Egypt, the point of open rupture was reached. The flocks and herds of both Abraham and Lot had increased so that the land was not able to bear them. It had become impossible, in other words, to find pasture grounds that would give forage for them all at once. The herdsmen of Lot quarreled with the herdsmen of Abraham. Probably Abraham had foreseen the rupture, for he appears to have been perfectly prepared to meet it. We cannot help marveling at the serenity and magnanimity of the patriarch at the same time that we are disgusted by the cupidity and selfishness of Lot. Calling his nephew to him Abraham says: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee and between thy herdsmen and my herdsmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." Perfect liberty of choice is accorded to Lot. The patriarch does not fear his ability to get on under any conditions, and he is ready to give to one who had occupied the place of a son in his tents the better choice. But Lot, on the other hand, is full of greediness and lust of pleasure. The rich pasture lands of the Jordan plain, with their fertility and abundance of water, awaken his cupidity. He wishes to feed his flocks in that favored territory. But this is not all. The increase of wealth, as is so often the case in every age, had developed in him luxurious tastes. The mere tending of cattle could not satisfy his desires. He was anxious to come into contact with men. His birth and early training in Ur, and again his recent visit to Egypt, had familiarized him with the seductive phases of civilized life; and now that increase of riches rendered such a result possible, he desired to share the privileges afforded by city life. Accordingly, he not only chose for his portion the plain of Jordan, but he went to dwell among the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

What a downfall was that! Here was one who had enjoyed the friendship and care of the greatest, wisest, and holiest man the world, up to that time, had seen, deliberately surrendering himself to a companionship that was most degrading, and adopting practices that are nameless. Sodom has become the synonym for everything that is vile and abominable in human life. We do not have a detailed account of what went on in Sodom. But we have enough to assure us that its wickedness was beyond all power of conception. We know something of the vile practices of many ancient pagan cities, and we often wonder how society could have held together under the existence of such iniquity. But, though the narrative in the Book of Genesis is not minute, there is enough to show that Sodom exceeded all other ancient cities in the vileness of its moral life; and, what is more, the evil was universal and all-inclusive. If Lot himself did not descend to the full depths of the prevailing infamy, his family, evidently, was completely submerged. At all events, from the moment of his separation from Abraham, Lot, whose life up to that time appears to have been honorable, entered upon a career the end of which was ignominy, oblivion, and death. The cities of the plain, of which Sodom was the chief, were built on volcanic soil. Underneath was what the Scripture calls "slime pits," asphaltic caverns, filled with combustible matter. The fulfillment of the wickedness of Sodom



THE DESTRUCTION OF SODOM.

was coincident with a great volcanic eruption. The destruction was widespread and complete. Lot's wife was so reluctant to quit the scene of dissipation and pleasure that she was overtaken by the catastrophe and destroyed. Only Lot and his two daughters escaped. The human race has had no more impressive lesson of the power of evil associations to degrade and corrupt those who yield to them than is furnished by the episode in the history of Lot and his wife. It stands here in the Book of Genesis in black and awful contrast to the holiness of the life of Abraham, to warn men of the danger that lies in toying with sinful indulgence. The Savior of the world did not fail to use it to give emphasis to the self-denial required of those who are to take up and carry forward the great work of proclaiming the Gospel.

CHAPTER IV.

ABRAHAM'S CONTACT WITH OUTSIDE HISTORY.

IT has been the fashion in times past to look with contempt upon the historical aspects of the Book of Genesis. Some of the greatest men of the last century were led completely astray by their failure to recognize the historical significance of the great narrative of the lives and fortunes of the patriarchs. Even to-day there are many — it may be said there are schools of critics — who affect to regard the story of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as wholly mythical. It is a story set in the midst of contemporaneous history, but does not touch it anywhere. It is a mere figment of the imagination, a beautiful pastoral idyl, having, it may be, a few fragments of fact underneath it, but facts that have been filtered through so many centuries of dreams and phantasies before being reduced to writing that no man can tell the true from the false. If we had nothing but the story itself, notwithstanding its apparent genuineness and the inherent probability by which it is marked, we might almost be baffled by the criticism of it. But it does not stand alone. The traditions of Abraham are not confined to the Holy Scriptures, nor to the peoples that accept the Scriptures as the Word of God. Many peoples regard him as a genuine historic personage, and the salient events of his life are carefully preserved. Nor is this all. The researches of the last forty years, covering almost the whole territory of Western Asia as well as the countries watered by the Nile, have thrown a flood of light on the land that was traversed by the great patriarch and the peoples amongst whom he lived and wrought. Egypt, though still shrouded in mystery, is no longer the mysterious country it once was. The mighty Pharaohs, long since dead, even when the historic nations of antiquity were in the beginning of their civic development, have been brought forth from their hidden sepulchers. Their mummy cases have been opened, their wrappings have been removed, and the story of the strange figures upon their wrappings and upon the cases has been deciphered. All this gives new interest to the movements of Abraham. Like many another, before and since his time, he went into Egypt. The characteristic of the grazing grounds of Western Asia is that, while they have ordinarily great fertility and are capable of sustaining in immense numbers the lives of men and animals, they are subject periodically to great and prolonged droughts. The custom is, and always has been under such circumstances, for the nomadic peoples to move away from the land, driving their flocks and herds before them, and to seek a pasturage that has not been parched and withered by the sun's rays. The great resort in the ancient time was Egypt. There, no matter how hot the sun, the ever-flowing Nile, bearing in its waters the rich alluvium from its mountain sources, rendered certain an abundant harvest. One of these periodic droughts occurred very soon after Abraham came into Canaan. By a

natural impulse, therefore, he crossed the wilderness country which his descendants, centuries later, were to cross under such widely different circumstances. He went into Egypt.

How many questions does this statement give rise to? When, in what year of the world's history, did Abraham make that journey? What did he find for civilization in Egypt? And who was the reigning Pharaoh? These questions are more easily asked than answered. We can only tell conjecturally the time. One thing is certain. Egypt was an old country at the time of Abraham's sojourn. Civilization had flourished for hundreds of years in the Nile valley. Monuments which to this day excite the wonder of travelers, were already venerable. Many dynasties of Pharaohs had risen, flourished, and passed away. The time of his contact with Egypt is variously put at from the sixth to the seventeenth dynasty. But the data have not yet been unearthed by which to settle definitely the periods of the dynasties previous to and including the Hyksos, or shepherd kings. With what particular monarch Abraham came in contact is, as I have said, uncertain. There is a pretty large consensus of opinion by men whose views in such matters are worthy of serious consideration, that the Pharaoh here mentioned was Set, or Salatis, the first of the Hyksos kings. Who were the Hyksos kings? It is asserted by Manetho that Egypt was conquered by an alien race, who set up what he called the "Middle Empire." Says Rawlinson: "Two native documents, one on stone and the other on papyrus, have proved beyond a question the fact of the foreign rule; two names of the alien rulers have been recovered from the inscriptions of the country; and though a deep obscurity still rests upon the period, upon the persons of the conquerors, and the circumstances of the conquest—an obscurity which we can scarcely hope to see dispelled—yet the Middle Empire has at any rate now taken its place in history as a definite reality requiring consideration, inquiry, and, so far as is possible, description." The prevailing opinion is that the conquering race was Semitic. If that is so, then their appearance, and even their language, could not have been strange to Abraham.

There is a tradition that a friendly alliance was formed between Abraham and Pharaoh, and that Abraham rendered him assistance in his warlike operations in Upper Egypt. Rawlinson believes that the conquerors came originally from Syria—that they were Hittites, who, having come into Canaan and increased in numbers until they were straitened for room, swept down in a great conquering wave upon Egypt. Probably at that time Egypt was ruled by a weak monarch and the people themselves had been weakened by luxury so that the empire was an easy prey to foreign invasion. The history of these Hyksos, or shepherd rulers, is interesting not only because they were a power in Abraham's day, but because it is supposed to be the last king of this race that showed kindness to Joseph and made room for Jacob and his sons in the land of Goshen. It is hardly to be supposed that upon their advent into Egypt they possessed as high a degree of civilization as those whom they conquered. But they rapidly made up for their deficiencies, and before their career had closed they had made important contributions to Egyptian culture. Not only were they bold and warlike, and possessed of unusual powers of organization and administration, but they enriched the language of the country and introduced valuable modifications into the methods of artistic representation.

One thing is certain from the account in the Book of Genesis: Polygamy was practiced by the Pharaoh whom Abraham found in power, as well as by every other Pharaoh of whose history we know anything. The enrichment of the harem was one of the important objects of the State. Officers were sent out to the confines of the empire to report the advent of every beautiful woman to the prince. Knowing this, Abraham made an arrangement with Sarah that she should represent herself as his sister. It does not seem that the reasons are adequately given in the text; but at all events this was the subterfuge adopted. It was repeated later on in life when he came into the domain of Abimelech. Isaac and Rebekah also employed the same device. There was a sense in which Sarah might say that she was the sister of Abraham,

and for this reason some have tried to defend the patriarchal pair from the charge of deceit. It does not avail. The claim that Sarah was the sister was made to obscure the fact that she was the wife. The lie is not to be reconciled with our standards of morals. The only apology for it must be found in the fact that Abraham, who was for the most part transcendently just, did not live under Christian standards, and that in his time lying was more common than truth-telling.

It seems that Sarah was a very beautiful and attractive woman and that she retained her beauty even in old age. The consequence was that she was immediately taken and transferred to the harem of Pharaoh. Large presents were given to Abraham in recompense; "sheep and oxen, and he asses and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels." But somehow things did not prosper. The record says: "The Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarah." The monarch was superstitious. He imagined that the evils he was suffering were due to the despite he had done to the great and noble sheik who had come to sojourn in his territory. Sending for him to come into his presence, he learned the true story of Sarah's relationship. On learning that, he was only too glad to return her to her husband without exacting any return of the presents by which he had enriched him. There is no definite statement of the time that Abraham spent in Egypt. There are some vague traditions, but they are without any substantial warrant of fact. It appears, however, that both he and Lot came out of the country far richer than they went in, though it is beyond question that they were already rich and powerful.

There is one other important episode in the life of Abraham, in which he touches the history of the outside world. The cities of the great Jordan valley, of which Sodom was the chief, had been for twelve years paying tribute to Chedorlaomer, king of Elam. This was a powerful nation lying to the eastward of Babylonia, and all these eastern countries had intercourse, more or less regular, with Egypt. It was a common thing, when the traffic into Egypt was interrupted or threatened, to send out a military expedition to bring the people into subjection. Thus the Canaanites, and later on the Israelites themselves, were repeatedly punished by Chaldeans, Babylonians, Assyrians, Elamites, Medes, and Persians. The punishment would last for awhile, but after a time, revolt would occur. Bera, the king of Sodom, and his confederates, after a twelve-years tribute rebelled in the thirteenth year, and in the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer, with his allies, appears to take vengeance upon the rebels. The war was very destructive for the Sodomites, and the Eastern armies returned with great spoil and many captives. Among the captives from Sodom was Lot, who had become, to all intents and purposes, a Sodomite. Abraham took no share in the fight. But on learning that his kinsman had been captured, he hastily armed his trained servants, 300 men born in his house, and pursued the retreating hosts. He was aided by Aner, Eschol, and Mamre. Making a sudden descent upon them in the night, he created such a panic that the soldiers took to flight, leaving their spoil behind them. Thus were Lot and the other captives, both men and women, rescued, and the entire spoil was returned. The extraordinary character of Abraham for generosity and justice is shown in the settlement that was made, on his return, with Bera and the other princes. By the usages of war prevailing in those times Abraham was entitled to all the spoil; and the princes, in their gratitude for what had been done, were ready to grant it to him. But Abraham had taken an oath to God Most High that he would not take a thread nor a shoe latchet for himself. After a certain reward for his companions in arms the whole was given back to the original owners.

There is an episode in the narrative that is of exceeding interest. Melchizedek, king of Salem, salutes Abraham and performs a priestly office in his behalf. The domain over which he ruled is generally supposed to be the territory surrounding what was afterward Jerusalem. But the surprising thing is that there should have been here a monotheist, a priest of God



ABRAHAM AND MELCHIZEDEK.

RAPHAEL.

Most High, even as Abraham himself was, and that Abraham should have recognized his superiority and paid him tithes. This fact has given rise to a great deal of conjecture and has formed the basis of extravagant notions. Some have supposed that this mysterious personage was the veritable Son of God, himself. For this view they seem to find warrant in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which, after setting forth the qualities of Melchizedek, declares that "he abideth a priest continually." It does not seem to be necessary to go to such an extreme length. It is only necessary to remember that Melchizedek was of the same race, doubtless, as Abraham. The Shemites generally may have for a long time cherished the tradition of the one God; and this man may have received that tradition and based his conduct upon it. As a king he would, according to oriental and ancient custom, be a priest. But there is no reason for supposing that he cherished either his belief or his priestly function with the same degree of purity that Abraham did. It was but natural, however, that the great patriarch should have bowed reverently before one who, like himself, worshiped the one living and true God. Moreover, it is a pleasing thought that, from the earliest time, on the spot where the temple of Solomon was one day to rise as the highest witness of human adoration, incense should have risen from devout hands and hearts to God Most High. So much for Abraham's relations with Chedorlaomer and the Sodomite kings, as given in the record of the Book of Genesis.

But it may be affirmed that this is all mythical — a pleasing story founded, perhaps, on some slight basis of fact, fashioned and wrought out in its minor details many centuries after. This might be regarded as plausible were it not for the fact that secular history stands as the living witness of the Scripture account. The existence of the Elamite empire in the time of Abraham is now a well-established fact. It is also well proven that the great conquering prince who ruled Elam was Kudur-Lagamer. Phonetically it will be seen that Chedorlaomer and Kudur-Lagamer are almost exact equivalents, and it cannot be doubted that they are one and the same person. I quote what Rawlinson has to say of him: "Kudur-Lagamer, the Elamite prince, who, more than twenty centuries before our era, having extended his dominion over Babylonia and the adjoining regions, marched an army a distance of 1,200 miles from the shores of the Persian Gulf to the Dead Sea, and held Palestine and Syria in subjection for twelve years, thus effecting conquests which were not again made from the same quarter till the time of Nebuchadnezzar, 1,500 or 1,600 years afterward, has a good claim to be regarded as one of the most remarkable personages in the world's history — being, as he is, the forerunner and prototype of all those great oriental conquerors who, from time to time, have built up vast empires in Asia out of the heterogeneous materials, which have in a longer or shorter space successively crumbled to decay. At a time when the kings of Egypt had never ventured beyond their borders, unless it were for a foray in Ethiopia, and when in Asia no monarch had held dominion over more than a few petty tribes and a few hundred miles of territory, he conceived the magnificent notion of binding into one the manifold nations inhabiting the vast tract which lies between the Zagros mountain range and the Mediterranean. Lord by inheritance (as we may presume) of Elam and Chaldea, or Babylonia, he was not content with these ample tracts, but, coveting more, proceeded boldly up the Euphrates valley, and through Syria into Palestine. Successful here, he governed for twelve years dominions extending near a thousand miles from east to west, and, from north to south, probably not much short of five hundred. It is true, he was not able to hold this large extent of territory; but the attempt and the success temporarily attending it are memorable circumstances and were probably long held in remembrance through Western Asia, where they served as a stimulus and incentive to the ambition of later monarchs."

It would appear, therefore, that the princes that were confederated with Chedorlaomer were those who had been appointed by him over the provinces that he had subjugated. Their names are not much more difficult of identification than his own. Amraphel had for his province



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southern Babylonia. Though his name has not been positively identified, it is conjectured that it may be Amar-Aku. He undoubtedly had the most important province and was held in highest esteem. The next king mentioned is Arioch. This is supposed to be Eri-Aku, literally servant of the Moon-god. He had for his domain southern Chaldea, or that part of the territory that was not already assigned to Amraphel. Tidal is undoubtedly Tur-gal, who held sway over all the country north of Babylonia, reaching up to the mountainous regions about the headwaters of the Euphrates. Thus a veritable part of ancient history, which has already been deciphered from the monuments, and about which there can be scarcely more doubt than there can be about the history of the wars of Cæsar, or the Norman conquest of England, fits into the sacred narrative — nay, this narrative throws light upon the history from the other side and gives to it a reality and life that it could not otherwise have. From one point of view it is almost as if this account of the patriarch had been divinely preserved to call up from the grave those dead monarchs of the Orient, and clothe them once more with flesh, and give them a living place in great historic movements of the race by which the civilization of humanity has reached its present high stage of development. If Abraham is indeed a myth, if the story of his friendship for the Canaanitish princes and his contact with Chedorlaomer is a fiction, it has been dovetailed into the living realities of historic truth with an art that no epic and no novel, in the highest masterpieces of literature, has yet achieved.

CHAPTER V.

ABRAHAM AND ISHMAEL.

AFTER his memorable contest with Chedorlaomer, Abraham returns again to Mamre, which appears to have been with him a favorite camping ground. There he had built an altar to God Most High, and there his customary worship was performed. We can imagine him superintending the work of his servants, appointing their tasks for them, visiting the pastures in which his numerous flocks and herds were grazing, holding communication now and then with his fast and faithful friends, Aner, Esheol, and Mamre, and doing all that became a great and powerful sheik. There was, however, a business far more serious in which he was engaged. He never for a moment forgot that he had been called from Ur and Haran to be a witness of the one living and true God, and that the land in which he was sojourning as a stranger had been given to him and his seed for an everlasting possession. But how was the promise to be fulfilled to him and his seed? The years were gathering over his head and the head of his faithful wife; and they were childless. "Fear not," said God. "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." But the patriarch cried in agony: "What wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?" "Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and lo, one born in my house is mine heir." How was this? How could a mere stranger and alien enter into the inheritance? The explanation is afforded again by the patriarchal system. The house could never be without a head. Blood relationship counted for but little. Children came not only by birth, but by adoption as well; and, in the failure of children, the strongest, the most exalted, stepped into the place of responsibility and trust. Hence Eliezer, as the person next in authority to Abraham, would become patriarch in the event of Abraham's death. But "the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir." "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars if thou be able to number them. . . . So shall thy seed be." We can hardly help wondering why the

faith of the patriarch should have been so tried. Of course, the devout Hebrew of every time has seen in this promise only the pointing out of a great fleshly inheritance that was to come through Isaac and Jacob. But it seems to me that a wise and unprejudiced reading of the record must see the great spiritual significance of the promise—that the withholding of the fulfillment was meant to teach Abraham, and above all, to teach us that the true descent is not after the flesh, but after the spirit, for “God is able of the stones to raise up seed unto Abraham.” At all events, after the assurance given, Abraham seems to have accepted the situation without murmuring, and to have trusted God to bring about the fulfillment of the promise in his own way. But Sarah did not fully share the faith of her husband. She had waited until long past the time of life when she might naturally expect the fulfillment of the promise. Now she could think of no way of accomplishing the result unless by a device not unfrequently resorted to in the oriental world, namely the substitution of a maidservant, not exactly as a concubine, but as a kind of secondary wife for the purpose of childbearing. Accordingly Hagar, the Egyptian bondswoman, was given by Sarah, as the record says, to Abraham to be his wife. “It is not necessary to mention in detail the misery and strife that followed in the train of this act. The jealousy and hatred of Sarah were terribly aroused by the exaltation that she herself had given to her handmaid. She would have cast Hagar out to die in the wilderness before the birth of her child, had not the angel of God interfered to encourage Hagar and preserve her from the fury of her mistress. But later on, after the birth of her own son, she did succeed in banishing both her and her offspring from the patriarchal household, and thus reserving the succession for the fruit of her own womb exclusively. It is impossible to read this story as it is simply and frankly told in the Book of Genesis without recognizing in it a terrible and ghastly picture of the evils of polygamy. It can scarcely be doubted, by those who accept the Scriptures as a divine message for the regulation of human conduct, that God, among other things, was teaching by this episode that domestic happiness can only be secured where one man is the husband of one wife, and is persistently faithful to his marriage vows.”

The result of the union of Abraham and Hagar was the birth of Ishmael. This seems to have constituted a new epoch in the life of the patriarch. The reproach was now removed. There was no longer any fear that a stranger would enter into the inheritance in the event of his death. Notwithstanding the promise had been so often repeated that Sarah should bear a son, it would seem from the reading of the record as if Abraham had come to feel that the birth of Ishmael was the fulfillment that had been promised. According to the standard of the time, Sarah had borne a son by the substitution of her handmaid. To the patriarch himself there was no difference, as sonship was then reckoned. Ishmael was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. In the light of ancient custom, the mother of his child, though his bondslave, was yet his lawful wife. Why should he not look for the fulfillment of the promise to bless all the kindreds and families of man in the generations of this child of deferred hope and promise? It is evident that God had not yet made plain all the mysteries of his providence to the great founder of our religion. This is apparent if we recall how the love of the patriarch went out toward the child, and how seriously he regarded the great future which stretched out before him and his descendants.

The institution of circumcision, the one great religious rite by which the Hebrews were ever after to be distinguished, is very significant. Up to the time that Ishmael was thirteen years old and when Abraham himself was ninety-nine, this rite had not been practiced by the patriarch. It is but fair to say that the rite was not original with him. He had doubtless become familiar with it, both during his sojourn in Egypt and by his contact with the Canaanites. On various grounds the rite held sway among many oriental peoples. For sanitary reasons, as it was supposed to promote fecundity, or, in some cases, on superstitious grounds, it was held in high favor. But none of these reasons are even hinted at by Abraham and his

descendants. By them it was held to be the type of chastening and purification. Like baptism in the Christian Church, it signified the putting away of a sinful and evil life and the consecration of the powers of heart, and mind, and soul to the service of God. It was the sign of a great covenant with God by Abraham and his seed after him, in their generations. Every man-child was to be circumcised, and the uncircumcised among them was to be cut off from his people as having broken the covenant of God. Thus the rite rose into new prominence and was invested with a new meaning. It became the distinguishing rite of the Hebrews and was to continue until the wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles should be broken down and the fleshly rite disappear in the circumcision of heart and life through faith and consecration to the service of humanity. The institution of this rite appears to have brought great serenity to the mind of Abraham, and it is doubtful if it did not occur to him that the object of his call was not now complete. But the end was not yet.

The record goes on to say that "the Lord appeared to him in the plains of Mamre." While he sat in his tent door, in the heat of the day, he saw three strangers approach. With customary hospitality he hastened forward to give them welcome and provide for their refreshment and comfort. But while he was discharging toward them the duties of an host they turned out to be the very messengers of God who had come to renew the promise, so often made before, that Sarah should have a son. This time the promise was more explicit. It was declared that she should have a son of her own body, and that in this way the succession should proceed. Through that particular chosen issue, all the nations were to find the proffered blessing. What a strange promise! No wonder that Sarah, who overheard it in her tent, should have laughed aloud with skeptical scorn. She was ninety years old and her lord was an hundred. How could such a thing be? Only by the mighty purpose and power of God. But when those things coincide there is no room for doubt. Moreover, the promise is all the more strange because it was no longer according to the ardent desire and hope of Abraham. His natural desires were already satisfied. The boy Ishmael had come to fill a large place in his heart. He had come to feel for him the strength of a great affection, and to look forward with satisfaction to the devolution of the patriarchal authority and privilege upon him. He had even gone so far as to pray to God: "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" He could hardly bear the thought that Ishmael should be supplanted in the succession even by a son of the beloved and beautiful Sarah, the wife whom he had chosen in his early manhood and who had been his faithful companion and helpmeet even to old age. But this was the will of God. Hence the promise was repeated and in due time it was fulfilled. Isaac was born and the succession was established in the lawful wife and her lawful son. The succession of the bondwoman was excluded. The weaning of Isaac was an occasion of great rejoicing in the patriarchal household. But while the feast was proceeding Ishmael was seen to mock. This roused the ire of Sarah and she demanded that the bondwoman and her son should be cast out. With a heavy heart, Abraham, after consulting God, took the only course by which domestic peace could be secured. He separated Hagar and her child from his house and sent them forth into the wilderness, but not, however, without his patriarchal benediction and the assurance from God that even Ishmael should become a nation. We recall the history of the Ishmaelites, who for more than forty centuries have played a mighty part in the dramatic fortunes of Western Asia, and who, through all these ages, have not ceased to call Abraham their father and to hold fast to their faith in the one God. Though inferior in importance to the chosen seed, they have entered into a large inheritance and have had, at least, a share in the promise that was made to their great ancestor. The prayer of Abraham has been answered and Ishmael has lived before God.

But there were grave mysteries here. Mighty questions rise again and again in our minds and demand an answer. Why was it needful to bring Hagar and her child into this record at all? Since God is Almighty, why could he not have given Isaac directly, without permitting



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the life of the patriarch to be soiled by practices that are pagan and degrading? There are various answers to this question. In the first place, the genuineness of this story is shown by the fact that it was cast in the mold of customs and practices that belonged to the period assigned to the life of the patriarch. Evidently this is no afterthought to which Jews and Ishmaelites of a later time have consented. It is a real story of a real time. Along with it we have a picture of the world as it was 4,000 years ago. The scenes, the people, the customs, were only such as could have existed then. Abraham is put into this environment and made to live his life there. We may go farther than this, and assert that the greatness of the man is shown, not by his conformity to the customs of the age, but by his ability, while practicing them, to perceive the error that was in them, and to rise above it and, when occasion required, put it away. It is true, indeed, that Abraham fell into a great error when he took Hagar to be his wife. He saw it in due time and humbled himself under the consciousness of it. In his humiliation, moreover, he showed himself ready to do what he could under the divine dictation to make amends. Then, too, as I have already intimated, we have in this story the most powerful rebuke that could be given of those polygamous practices which have been the curse of the Orient. Again we ask, why was Isaac a necessity after Ishmael was born? Admitting that Ishmael was the son of a bondwoman, he was the son of Abraham and not to be blamed because of the condition or relations of his mother. Why should not the Almighty lift him up and let the promise that was to find its culmination in the blessing of all nations and races be realized in him? It is not easy, perhaps, to give a full and satisfactory answer to this question. About all we can say is that in the history of the world blood is seen to count for much. There is a marked and irreconcilable difference between Englishmen, and Germans, and Frenchmen. The union of any two of these nationalities does not give a pure type. Much more wide is the difference between Hamites, and Shemites, and Aryans. Here is a difference that cannot be successfully bridged. For some inscrutable reason, God was moved, in the call of Abraham and the setting apart of the Hebrews as a distinct people that should be holy and acceptable in his sight, to preserve them from contamination and corruption by alliances with the peoples amongst whom they dwelt. The issue of Abraham and the Egyptian maid could not give the pure source out of which a nation, as wonderful as any in history, was to flow. The legitimate line of Abraham and Sarah must be adhered to. Whether there was any religious reason inherent in the character of Isaac, we do not know. The life of Isaac, in comparison with the almost peerless life of his father, is pale and colorless. It is almost devoid of interest or incident. But perhaps its very lack of positive features made it plastic so that it was easily fitted to the great mold that had been prepared for it. This, at least, seems to be according to a law of human life. One generation wins a great fortune or a great name, or does a great work, and the next generation conserves it, building upon it, not by way of positive and original construction, but by way of adjustment and accretion. This was the case with Isaac. He accepted the work of his father without question. He gave complete and unyielding obedience to his commands while he lived, and after he died he entered quietly into the inheritance remaining for him with the purpose to continue before men the life of the patriarch with all its old dignity and splendor. That Abraham and Sarah found in this gentle child of their old age a great and surpassing comfort is not to be questioned. In a sense they must have felt that they had fulfilled their destiny and that they had found a reward for all the trials and hardships they had undergone. If Abraham paused to reflect, as no doubt he did, he must have felt assured, that, in a most important sense, the call that had brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees, and again out of Haran, had already borne its proper fruit. Though the land of Canaan was not his, he could look forward to the time when his seed should enter into it and possess it. So far as his own activities were concerned, he may have felt that his work was done, and that he could now leave his son to carry forward the great purposes of the call.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC.

FROM the birth of Isaac the current of Abraham's life appears to have flowed on without a ripple almost, only now and then being interrupted by something that showed he was still mindful of the fact that he had been called and set apart as the priest and prophet of humanity in an age that was full of wickedness and falsehood. Even he was not wholly free from misconceptions and evil practices. How could he be, unless he were a supernatural being, or a being supernaturally restrained from the exercise of his volitions? The hand of God, to be sure, was upon him and was actively exerted at proper intervals to direct his steps. But his manhood was not interfered with. In a grand way his contention was with things as they were. He was not wholly free from the superstitions of his times. One of the most powerful of these was the notion that the favor of God was to be secured by the most costly and precious sacrifice. Indeed, this is a notion that has pervaded the minds of primitive peoples in all ages of the world. It is this notion, moreover, that has led to the terrible and revolting practice of human sacrifice. So Abraham, living in an age that was most crude and cruel in its conceptions, both of God and humanity, could believe that the great God whom he worshiped would be pleased if he should yield up, on the altar of sacrifice, that in which his highest hope was centered. All this, together with the fact that God, in revealing his will unto the patriarch, met him on the low plane of his misconceptions for the purpose of leading him up to a higher one, must be borne in mind as we come to the story of the sacrifice of Isaac. "And it came to pass," we read, "that God did tempt [in Revised Version, *prove*] Abraham, and said unto him, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." And what did Abraham do? With the same unyielding obedience that he manifested when he was called to go out from Ur of the Chaldees, he made ready for the saddest journey he could have undertaken. If he stopped to consider the meaning of this mandate it must have been a sore puzzle to him to conceive how it was possible for God to fulfill the promise so often made by the destruction of the very child on whom the fulfillment depended. Perhaps, however, the patriarch did not reason about the mysterious mandate. God had already performed so many wonders in his behalf that he had, perhaps, ceased to doubt. The mighty power that had given to him and his spouse in their old age this precious child, might, if they were faithful, find some other way of confirming their hopes. "And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for a burnt offering, and rose up and went to the place of which God had told him." Dean Stanley thinks the mountain chosen for the sacrifice was Gerizim, the mountain from which the incense of sacrifice has scarcely ceased to ascend for forty centuries. There is some reason for this, as the mountain can be seen looming against the sky from a long distance and would naturally make its appeal, by reason of both its mystery and majesty, to the devout feeling of primeval worshipers. The place, however, where this act was performed is of small account. All our interest centers in the act itself.

There is hardly a passage in the sacred narrative from Genesis to Revelation that has so severely tried men's faith as this. Not only has it evoked sharp dissent, but it has in some cases awakened a feeling of strong revolt against Abraham, and above all against the idea or suggestion that God could have had any active connection with the proposed sacrifice. It

appears strange that readers should need to be reminded that they are not reading a narrative of events that occurred in the last decade of the nineteenth century of Christendom, but rather of events that must be placed more than twenty centuries before the Christian era, and that the real wonder is that men could think so clearly and correctly as they did, or that they behaved in so many matters so much like ourselves. The story is unaffectedly and simply told. If it be taken as a whole, and above all, if we keep in mind the great lessons it was meant to teach, (1) of self-surrender, (2) of implicit trust in God, (3) of unquestioning obedience to the divine will, even when it deprives us of our dearest friends and crushes our highest hopes, (4) or, better than all, of the great fact that God is not pleased with the bloody sacrifice and burnt offering, but with the consecration and devotion of heart and life, there is nothing in the story to offend, but everything rather to draw forth our admiration and quicken our faith. Indeed, what pathos there is in the laying of the wood for the burnt offering on the shoulders of the lad, in the simple colloquy between the father and the son as they were nearing the place of worship, and finally in the binding of the son and placing him upon the altar for the sacrifice. All this seems to have been requisite in order, by a dramatic incident, to abolish forever that most revolting practice of primitive worship. The readiness, the absolute self-surrender of both father and son, was enough—so complete was it in the instance before us that it was possible henceforth to lay the emphasis on that, and that alone, as the open way to the presence and favor of the highest.

We cannot do better than to quote, in this connection, the profound and truthful observations of Dean Stanley: "The sacrifice, the resignation of the will, in the father and the son was accepted; the literal sacrifice of the act was repelled. On the one hand, the great principle was proclaimed that mercy is better than sacrifice, and that the sacrifice of self is the highest and holiest offering that God can receive. On the other hand, the inhuman superstition, toward which the ancient ceremonial of sacrifice was perpetually tending, was condemned and cast out of the true worship of the Church forever. There are doubtless many difficulties which may be raised on the offering of Isaac: but there are few, if any, which will not vanish away before the simple pathos and lofty spirit of the narrative itself, provided that we take it, as in fairness it must be taken, as a whole; its close not parted from its commencement, nor its commencement from its close—the subordinate parts of the transaction not raised above its essential primary intention. And there is no difficulty which will not be amply compensated by reflecting on the near approach, and yet the complete repulse, of the danger which might have threatened the early Church. Nothing is so remarkable a proof of a divine and watchful interposition as the deliverance from the infirmity, the exaggeration, the excess, whatever it is, to which the noblest minds and the noblest forms of religion are subject. . . . Abraham reached the very verge of an act which, even if prompted by noble motives and by a divine call, has, by all subsequent revelation and experience, been pronounced accursed. At that moment his hand is stayed; and the patriarchal religion is rescued from this conflict with the justice of the Law or the mercy of the Gospel."

Nearly all writers in the Christian Church have seen, or thought they saw, in the act of Abraham and Isaac, many strong resemblances to the great sacrifice of Calvary. Of course, it is possible to press an image of this kind to almost any extent. Indeed, some theories have been carried to the very verge of absurdity. No doubt there was something in the act that was by divine intention prophetic. The spirit was the same in both cases. The inexpressible love of Abraham for his child and yet his perfect readiness to give him up for a high purpose, is a faint human symbol of the boundless love of God which spared not his own Son for our sakes. The meek and unresisting compliance of Isaac is a partial foreshadowing of that marvelous self-surrender which found utterance in the prayer: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Beyond this it is not wise to go.



"LAY NOT THINE HAND UPON THE LAD."

Indeed, it would seem as if the main purpose was to rob sacrifice, under both the old and new dispensations, of its perplexing mysteries. The Jews certainly so understood it. Their sacrifice of animals was but symbolical. The great unceasing demand of their prophets was that the people should witness their devotion by the broken spirit and the contrite heart. This was the incense that was most acceptable to God. In the New Testament the cry of the Savior of mankind is the old cry: "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," or higher still in the hour of his sharpest agony, though forced to exclaim, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" he immediately adds, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." There is, therefore, one order, one spirit, one grand lesson, running through from the beginning of the revelation of God to its sublime consummation in the garden of Gethsemane and on Calvary. In this sense certainly these two events are bound together. In this sense the one is the portent, the shadow, the type, the prophecy of the other. In this sense the unresisting obedience of Isaac and the voluntary submission of Jesus are but the varying exhibitions of that matchless love by which God is drawing the nations of the earth unto himself. Herein Mount Moriah and Mount Calvary meet and blend together as the veritable mountain of God. Nay, further, we can see how the oath of the Lord which he swore by himself saying, "Because thou hast done this thing and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; . . . in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying, I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." We can see how this oath finds its counterpart and culmination in the declaration of Jesus: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." The seed of Abraham is without limitation of race, or sect, or creed. All to whom the appeal of the cross is made may find acceptance through faith and sacrifice.

There is not much more of large historic moment in the life of Abraham. One or two incidents, however, remain that have a tender, almost a religious interest. We cannot close the account of the great patriarch's career without noticing them. Sarah's great work was complete in giving birth to Isaac, though she was permitted the privilege of seeing him grow to mature manhood. When she had reached the age of one hundred and twenty-seven, and when Isaac was thirty-seven, she died. On the death of Sarah it became necessary for Abraham to provide himself with a burial place. Here was this mighty sheik, with whom princes were confederated, who could from "those born in his house" equip an army, to whom the most high God had sworn again and again that to him and his seed would he give all the land of Canaan, owning nothing of the land in which he dwelt unless it were the wells he had dug for his cattle. The death of Sarah occurred in Hebron, that part of Canaan where Abraham spent so large a portion of his time. His desire was for the double rock cave, in the field of Machpelah, that belonged to Ephron the Hittite. The account that follows gives a most graphic picture of a very ancient form of conveyance. In the first place there is a formal assembly of all the people who could have any possible interest in the sale. Then there are the set questions and answers as in an ancient Roman mancipation. There were the dramatic features all intended to make a profound and lasting impression on the minds of the witnesses, as Abraham bowing himself down in the presence of the people. Finally the scales are brought out and the money is actually weighed in the sight of all, "400 shekels of silver, current money with the merchant." All this points to a very primitive time, when not only registry was unknown, but when conveyances by writing had not been thought of, and when land was not the property of a single individual but belonged to a group of persons, a family, and even a tribe. Here is one of the indubitable witnesses of the high antiquity of the story. It is absolutely incredible that at any late period of the Hebrew history the details of this purchase could have been invented. None but an eyewitness of the scene itself, or at least one



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who was familiar with transactions as ancient and primitive as these, could have told that tale. Moreover, the field and the cave still remain. From the hour that Abraham purchased the spot as a burial place for his beloved companion it has been held sacred alike to Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians; and it is believed that to this day the remains of the patriarchs and their wives have remained undisturbed. The cave of Machpelah holds great secrets which some time may be brought out to confirm the faith of the world.

After the death of Sarah, Abraham, feeling the weight of years pressing upon him, and realizing that he had not much longer to stay upon the earth, called his old and faithful servant, Eliezer, to him and made him swear that he would not take a wife for Isaac from the daughters of the land, but that he would go back to the ancestral seats and fetch one of his own kindred to share with him in the perpetuation of the race. When God undertakes to lay the foundations of a nation or a race he takes great pains in the selection of the material. Longfellow has given poetic expression to the truth in the familiar lines concerning the Pilgrims:

“God had sifted three kingdoms to find the wheat for this planting,
Then had sifted the wheat, as the living seed of a nation.”

The nation that was to spring from Abraham and his descendants was to be the most unique and peculiar that the world has ever witnessed; and the work that was to be accomplished in and through it was to be the most difficult, the loftiest, the most delicate, sacred, and far-reaching in its consequences of any work that has ever been done for man. For this reason the race must be absolutely pure in its beginning. No cross between the Hebrews and the Egyptians could be tolerated. Hence, Ishmael was set aside, though he was the firstborn, and Esau, later on, was rejected for similar reasons. Isaac must not marry a wife from the daughters of the land. This is the oath that was exacted from the old servant, Eliezer of Damascus, the steward of Abraham's house, that he would journey back by that way over which Abraham came into Canaan to the Syrian plain in which Abraham had left his kindred when, in obedience to the mandate of God, he came out of Haran. The story of that journey is simply but graphically told. Eliezer loaded the camels with precious stuffs as a bridal present to the damsel whom he was to bring back to be the wife of his young master, and went forth to the home of Nahor, Abraham's brother. Arriving there, he waited by the well for the maidens to come forth in the evening to draw water. While waiting he prayed to God to enlighten him by certain signs. But before the prayer was fully formed in his heart, the beautiful Rebekah came forth with her piteher upon her shoulder and tripped down the steps of the great well for her pitcher of water, and as she came up again Eliezer hastened forward and asked her for a drink. With gracious hospitality she complied with his request, and not only gave him a drink, but immediately began to pour water into the troughs for the camels. Then when the servant of Abraham had questioned her and found out her lineage, that she was indeed kindred to Abraham and his son, he made known to her the errand on which he had come. He takes from his rich treasures a beautiful nose ring for Rebekah's face. He puts two heavy bracelets upon her wrists, and asks for entertainment. Of course, he is welcomed. The greedy and crafty Laban, of whom we shall see more later on in this history, the brother of Rebekah, seeing the rich jewels that have been bestowed upon his sister, hastens forth to bring Eliezer into his father's tent. But it is not courtesy that the great servant of Abraham is seeking, but a wife for his master's son. So he urges forward the business with all speed. The preliminaries of the betrothal are completed before retiring to rest. In the morning Eliezer demands an immediate and decisive answer to his request. Of course, the opportunity for so grand a marriage for Rebekah must not be lost. Moreover, Laban and Bethuel had seen the hand of the Lord in the meeting between Rebekah and Eliezer. Still, they would postpone the consummation of the business for a few days. Perhaps Laban thought he saw the possibility of his



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REBEKAH ACCEPTING ISAAC'S PRESENTS.

own enrichment by presents which Eliezer might be induced to bestow upon him while he waited. But Eliezer was a thorough business man, as we would say to-day. He had come on a great errand. He was ready to pay the stipulated price for the maiden — for women were really sold in marriage in Abraham's time — but as soon as that was done he must be gone. Under the circumstances, then, there was nothing to be done but to summon Rebekah and ask her if she was ready to accompany this man into Canaan. With characteristic eagerness and impetuosity, when the question was put to her if she would go with him whom the Lord had sent to her, she said: "I will go." So the caravan started, bearing Rebekah on as momentous a journey as ever woman took in this world, carrying with her the blessing of her family, with the petition sounding in her ears that she might become the mother of thousands of millions.

CHAPTER VII.

ISAAC AND REBEKAH.

THE fact that both Abraham and Isaac were awaiting his return with impatience contributed no doubt to the haste of Eliezer. The death of Sarah had admonished the patriarch that whatever he was to do in his own person, to make sure of the succession and fulfill the promise made at the birth of Isaac, must be done quickly. Isaac himself was in sadness and dejection of spirit on account of the loss of the mother who had lavished upon him the affection of her old age, and needed the comfort which only the love of a true heart could bring. His mother's tent standing silent and empty emphasized the desolation and loneliness of his spirit. These things were a lodestone to draw Eliezer back to Canaan with all speed. Likewise the signs that had attended the performance of his errand, the almost miraculous finding of Rebekah, the fact that she was of Abraham's near kindred, her beauty and high spirit, and her readiness to accept the proffer of his young master, above all the confusion and consequent compliance of Laban and Bethuel in the face of the portents, and their frank acknowledgment that the thing proceeded from the Lord and they could not speak either good or bad, all had the effect of making Eliezer feel that he too was in the hand of God Most High, and was his chosen agent to assist in carrying out the sublime purposes of the call. By what route he traveled, either in going into Syria or returning to Canaan, it is impossible to tell. He may have followed the one which Abraham took on his departure from Haran, which was most likely the longer way along the foothills of Northern Syria and Palestine as affording pasturage for his flocks and herds on the road, or he may have taken the shortest course over the desert. From the evidences of haste afforded by the narrative, and from the fact that the caravan was composed only of camels to bear the burdens and carry the people, it is likely that the latter was the route chosen in both going and returning. The distance from Beersheba to Haran, across the desert by the way of Damascus and the oasis of Tadmor, was about 450 miles — possibly 500 miles. The fleetest variety of camels in our time, when not too heavily laden, can travel fifty miles a day for many days in succession. It is not improbable that the ancients were as careful in breeding their animals for speed as the moderns. In that case, about twenty to twenty-five days would have been occupied in the round journey. At all events, whatever the time, it could be easily calculated. It is evident that Isaac was expecting the return of his father's servant, and as the owner of a vessel bound on an important voyage looks out in due season for its appearance in port, so Isaac went out not only to meditate but to watch for the coming of those ships of the

desert "that bore such a precious freight for him." At last he discerns them, far off, probably on the edge of the horizon, and hastens forward to meet them. As he draws near, Rebekah inquires of Eliezer who is the distinguished-looking stranger approaching. On being informed that it is his young master, the very man whom he has brought her out of Syria to marry, she alights from her camel and covers herself with a veil. This action is prompted by two reasons, first, because in that country, then as now, no maiden might meet a man of high distinction and noble bearing while riding, and, secondly, because, then as now, in that quarter of the world, no virgin might lawfully be seen unveiled by the man who was to become her husband until after the consummation of the marriage. Isaac, according to oriental custom, addressed himself not to the maiden but to the servant, who gave him an account of his enterprise and of the divine portents by which it had been attended. Then Isaac took Rebekah and led her in to his mother's tent and she became his wife, and when he beheld her beauty and recalled what she had forsaken for his sake he loved her with a love that was to last till death.

The characters of Isaac and Rebekah are in strange and strong contrast. The account of their lives, very uneventful for the most part no doubt, is much more meagerly given in the sacred narrative than we could wish. Nor does tradition help us out much. Still, we have sufficient data for a pretty reliable portrait of this wonderful pair whom God had united for the working out of his most wonderful and far-reaching designs. It is almost beyond question that Rebekah was one of the most remarkable women of whom history has made record. No one can read the brief story of the Book of Genesis without reaching the conviction that she was endowed with an extraordinary beauty. Her personal charms, however, only served to heighten an extraordinary character. Enterprising, ardent, high-spirited, proud, every vein in her body filled with the warmest oriental blood, she seemed to be endowed with some lofty sense of the call, and to recognize her responsibility under it. At the same time, we are obliged to confess that she manifested something of the greed and craft of her brother Laban, and had some of his unscrupulousness in her method of securing the fulfillment of the promise through the line of her favored son. Perhaps we ought not to be surprised at this. It would be manifestly unfair, in view of her birth and early surroundings, to judge her as if she were a daughter of Abraham. Unquestionably her energetic spirit and unyielding determination have stamped themselves upon the thousands of millions of whom she is the mother. We cannot, therefore, read the strange and eventful histories of the Israelitish people without beholding, more or less distinctly, everywhere a reflection of the woman of glorious beauty and haughty spirit whose blood courses in all their veins. Isaac evidently was the very antipode of his wife, a man of contemplation, a man of peace, a man of meek and lowly mind, destitute of the enterprise that had made his father a mighty prince whom other princes were only too glad to be "confederate with," more ready to suffer wrong than to right it — content to enter into the patrimony of his father, and to keep it by a quiet and conservative adherence to the ancient ways. Still, I think we are amply justified in regarding him as a man of devout habit and spiritual temper. He maintained the ancient altars and performed the worship which his father had taught him. He was not destitute of the high vision and unquestioning faith that had given his father a place apart from all other men. At the same time he appears to have given himself almost exclusively to the care of his flocks and herds, so that he is very appropriately the connecting link between that life of faith which saw the blessing of God reaching out to include all nations and kindreds of mankind, and those narrower phases of religious conviction and worship, together with a peculiar absorption in secular things, that were indispensable to the development of a particular race. However, therefore, we look at Isaac, we see him standing midway between the father of the faithful on the one hand and that other strange being whose life, beginning in low cunning and deceit ends on the very heights of prophecy, crying "gather yourselves together, ye sons of Jacob, and hearken unto Israel your father."

Twenty years elapsed without any fruit to bless the union of Isaac and Rebekah. It was a long and anxious waiting. But at length, in answer to prayer and sacrifice, Rebekah's womb was opened and two sons were born. The first came forth all red and hairy, and accordingly to him was given the name of Esau. The second came forth grasping his brother's heel, and to him, therefore, was given the name of Jacob, "the supplanter." These children as they grew were even more unlike in character than were father and mother. Esau was a wild and lawless youth, careless of the feelings and hopes of others and equally careless of his own interests. Following the polygamous practices of the times, he made various alliances with the Canaanitish women, "which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and Rebekah." With Abraham alive to utter his warning against it, with the remembrance of the reason for sending Eliezer to Haran for Rebekah strong in their thought, they must have been fully persuaded that the succession could not proceed in that way. The conduct of Esau was undoubtedly the occasion of much earnest expostulation on the part of father and mother. Finally, by way of deference to the Hebrew stock, Esau took a wife from the descendants of Ishmael. This, however, was not in the appointed way. Ishmael had been previously rejected in his own person and he could not be brought into the inheritance through his descendants. There are many things that bear witness to the reckless and untamable spirit of Esau. He was a hunter. Coming in from the chase hungry and seeing his brother with a savory mess ready for the table, he asks that his hunger may be satisfied with it. Jacob offers it to him for his birthright. Precisely what the birthright was it is impossible to say. Most commentators treat the birthright of Esau and the "blessing" of Isaac as if they were one and the same thing. But they are not. They are plainly distinguished by Esau himself. Moreover, most writers appear to think that *primogeniture* was the prevailing custom in patriarchal times, but it was not. Abraham was not the oldest, but the youngest son of Terah. Isaac, the secondborn, was preferred before Ishmael, the firstborn. Jacob, the secondborn, was accepted in the place of Esau, the firstborn. Reuben, the firstborn of Jacob, was cast out and cursed for iniquity. Again, Ephraim, the secondborn of Joseph, was distinctly chosen instead of Manasseh. At the same time, there was a special tenderness for the firstborn son. Undoubtedly he had certain prerogatives and privileges which belonged to him by reason of his birth—just what we cannot now say—and it was these that Esau "despised," in comparison with the soup of lentils. Notwithstanding his lawless spirit, Isaac evidently had a particular fondness for Esau. Beyond question he was not the first nor the last parent whose heart has gone out with a deep yearning for a wayward, impetuous, and ungovernable child. Perhaps the very contrast of Esau's temper with his own made him love him all the more. It can scarcely be that the finger of God had made it plain to Isaac that the succession was to be in Jacob. But Rebekah, perhaps under the instruction partly of Abraham, who lived until Jacob was fifteen years old, saw more clearly. The quiet, gentle youth, domestic in his habits, contented with the flocks and herds of the field, the young man of meditative mind, planning for and forecasting the future, had in him the elements out of which God would be more likely to make a nation. It is not strange that she should watch between these two children with increasing vigilance.

At length the supreme moment arrived. In his old age, when his vision and strength had failed, Isaac thinks of the succession. Who is to have charge of what the ancient Romans called the *Sacra*? Who is to be intrusted with the implements of worship? Who is to perform the sacrifices of the family and hold communion with Jehovah? In other words, who was to continue the patriarchate? That, be it remembered, and not property, was the vital thing. So far as appears from the record, Jacob never received any of Isaac's property. What he had in the way of goods he had earned himself by long years of painful toil and service. The foregoing were the questions which, in his old age, lay heavily on Isaac's soul. In his weakness it was but natural that he should turn wistfully to the beloved child of the chase. Calling Esau,

therefore, and bidding him go forth and capture venison for him, he promises to give him the "blessing." But Rebekah, hearing the colloquy, immediately prepares to circumvent it. By the device that is familiar to everybody, Jacob is substituted for Esau in the "blessing" of his father. The question now is—the question no doubt that has been raised by countless readers—why should a blessing obtained by fraud stand? Why should not a blessing so given have been recalled? Above all, why should not Isaac, in obedience to the bitter cry of Esau, have given a second blessing to Esau? The answer to these questions is simple. In the first place, the designation of the succession was a solemn thing. It was done with great formality, and that by ancient custom could not be recalled, no matter how it was obtained. The second blessing could not be given, because the blessing that carried with it the succession or headship of the family could only be for one. Jacob having secured it, there was no place for Esau. It was only natural that Esau should feel a deep resentment at the subtlety of his brother, so much as to make it dangerous for the latter to remain in the same tents with him. We can readily appreciate the motherly solicitude of Rebekah, in preparing for Jacob's flight. It will be noticed that Isaac himself, after recovering from the sharp disappointment occasioned by the subterfuge, entered heartily into the plan of sending Jacob back to the ancestral seats for a suitable marriage. The old feeling of resentment at Esau's conduct in defying the conditions by which the purity and permanence of the family were to be secured remained. Isaac saw, when he came to reflect, as he was undoubtedly led to do by the expostulation of Rebekah, that the hope of the future was vested in Jacob, and so he did not hesitate to repeat to his second son the injunction which Abraham gave in his own case to Eliezer: "Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban, thy mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham." Thus Isaac rises to a full appreciation of the significance of the call and performs his part in bringing it to a successful issue.

Perhaps we ought not to dismiss this account altogether without some reference to the colloquy between Isaac and Esau after the discovery of the deceit that had been practiced by Jacob and Rebekah. Esau inquires, "Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?" And Isaac answers: "Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants." Then Esau, almost in despair, cries, "Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me, O my father." Then it is that Isaac rises to the height of prophecy and says: "Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; and by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck." Here is a wonderful epitome of the subsequent history of Edom. Esau was not a nonentity. He was brave, restless, and enterprising. These qualities he stamped upon his descendants to a remarkable degree. They were as unstable as water. But they were fearless as they were fickle. In the language of Josephus, "A tumultuous and disorderly nation, always on the watch upon every motion, delighting in mutations; and upon your flattering them, ever so little, and petitioning them, they soon take up arms, and put themselves in motion, and make haste to a battle as if it were a feast." Sometimes they were in alliance with the Israelites, sometimes they were arrayed in arms against them. Sometimes they believed the prophets and sometimes they rejected them altogether. The Herodian family were of this stock, and in them we see depicted their variations of temper and attitude—the cruel destroyer of the innocents, the eager listener to the message of John the Baptist, and Agrippa, almost persuaded by the eloquence of Paul to be a Christian. Truly, that was a far-reaching vision of the aged patriarch which saw the qualities of his son in his descendants to their remotest generation. It is strange, indeed, that

in these earlier Old Testament characters we find the types of the nations that proceeded from them and followed in their steps. But it was so in the case of Esau no more, and no less, than in the case of Jacob. Both of them were prototypes of the peoples who have borne their names; both of them left the indelible marks of their characters upon their descendants; both of them live in the pages of human history by the qualities they have transmitted to posterity. In the case of Jacob, as having greater patience, pertinacity, and persistency of spirit which nothing can break — the unflinching determination that rises dauntless and victorious even from every defeat — a race has been created, bearing his name, that has passed through every vicissitude of freedom and oppression, of exaltation and humiliation, of prosperity and poverty, of glory and reproach; sometimes grasping the scepter of power, and again deprived of it altogether; sometimes intrenched in the land which God gave by promise to Abraham, and again scattered abroad as fugitives and strangers over the face of the whole earth, but continuing, nevertheless, and bidding fair to continue, with all their peculiarities, as a distinct people, while time shall last. The history, therefore, of the founder of such a people, apart even from any religious significance arising from his connection with the call of Abraham, is of the utmost importance and the deepest interest. On secular grounds alone the past ages of the world present no name that is more worthy of careful and profound study than Jacob.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FLIGHT OF JACOB.

THE flight of Jacob marks a distinct turning point in the history. In the first place, the migration seems to return upon itself. The movement is for a time reversed. Whereas Abraham was bidden to go out from his kindred and his father's house, Jacob returned to the ancestral seats. He leaves the land which God had sworn to give him and his seed and becomes a Syrian. Looking back upon it as we do over the long vista of subsequent history, we see only the temporary aspects of the event. If we could take a contemporary view it would seem almost like a deliberate abandonment of the call. Moreover, when the call is again accepted it is on lines that are distinctly narrower than those pursued by Abraham. It no longer has the world-wide, nor even the Messianic aspects it had before. It pertains rather to the sons of Jacob, the people of Israel. In passing over, therefore, in our account from Abraham, "the friend of God," to Jacob, "the plain man dwelling in tents," we seem to be passing from one to whom the divine mind was open, and who was indeed the executor of the divine purpose, to one who, while governed by ordinary human motives and seeking the ends which common mortals strive to attain, was yet directed and controlled by an infinite providence.

The movement of Jacob has some of the aspects of a flight, as if he were trying to escape the avenging presence of his brother. Before his departure he presents himself once more to his father, whose anger seems to have subsided, and who gives him a renewal of the blessing, repeating the very words that before had been used in designating Abraham as the founder of a new race and a new religion. Moreover, as far as Isaac is concerned, he does not appear to be conscious of sending his son merely to a place of safety, but rather is marking him out as his successor in the divine trust, and as such sending him to Padan-aram for a wife according to the limitation imposed by Jehovah in the original call. This view is confirmed by the fact that though Isaac lived sixty-three years longer, his life dropped entirely into the background, and

only momentarily appeared again in the most inconsequential way. Jacob is henceforth the one prominent figure in the patriarchal story in whom the designs of providence are centered. Some commentators seem to think that Jacob must have taken with him at least a small retinue of servants. Remembering the wealth of Isaac in "servants and cattle," it would seem to be almost inherently improbable that he should not. The record, however, does not say so. Indeed, from the beginning of the account to the time of his arrival at "Laban's house" there is no hint of either servants to bear him company, or camels or asses to lighten his journey. The distinct impression is rather that he was alone. Nay, he himself says, "with my staff I passed over this Jordan."¹ If this be true, as it seems to me it must be, the impressiveness of the story is greatly heightened.

The point of departure was Beersheba, the country abounding in wells of sweet water in the far south of Palestine, where both Abraham and Isaac delighted to sojourn. The first halting place mentioned in the narrative was in the mountains of Ephraim, about twelve miles north of the subsequent site of Jerusalem, and at least four days' journey from Beersheba. This halt, however, deserves historic preservation, because it was the scene of the wonderful vision, the most striking account of angelic appearance and revelation contained in the Old Testament; and because, also, it marks the beginning of a life-long consecration to the will of Jehovah and the lofty and far-reaching purposes of the call. While Jacob rested, with one of the stones of the place for a pillow, he saw a ladder or staircase reaching from earth to heaven. At the head of the staircase was God himself, while traversing up and down over the steps of that mystic ladder were the shining forms of angels. Where, even in the New Testament, do we have a more distinct, impressive, and beautiful account of the spiritual nature of man, of the communion of saints, of the reality of heavenly intercourse, and the possibility of human access to God? No wonder that Jacob should have recognized this as a great event which denoted a turning point in his career. How it opened his mind, too, to the divine omnipresence: "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not!" A holy awe takes possession of him as he sees himself as something other than the mere patriarchal successor of Isaac and Abraham, going forth into a strange land to seek a wife and fortune, as he recognizes that God is calling him, as before he had called Abraham, to be his minister and do his will. It may not be that Jacob had all the largeness of view of the spirituality of providence that is possible to those who have had the advantage in their training of the three or four thousand years that have elapsed since the event occurred. It may be that into the covenant he was about to make with God there entered something of his human selfishness and ambition. How could we reasonably expect it to be otherwise, in view of the nature and training of the man? It is enough for us to know that he rose from that slumber and the vision that came to him in his sleep, as Saint Paul did from the light that shone upon him in the Damascus road — as, indeed, everyone must from a heavenly vision and a holy call — a changed man. Life meant more to him than it had ever meant before. A wholly new relation had been established between him and his God, and he must do his work henceforth in a different spirit and purpose from any he had yet cherished. Therefore it was that he called the place Bethel, the house of God. Therefore it was that he took the stone that had served as his pillow and transformed it into an altar. He set it up as a memorial to remind him, when he should return to the land of promise, of the glory that had shone upon him there. He poured oil upon it, that it might be rendered sacred in the sight of men, and vowed that when he should come again he would perform his worship on that spot. Not only to Jacob, but to the Hebrews ever after, that was a sacred spot.

But perhaps the most interesting and impressive part of the whole narration of the halt at Luz or Bethel was the vow which Jacob made. Feeling that God had met him there, and that he was, indeed, in his very presence; believing that thus far he had directed his steps, he felt

¹ Genesis xxxii, 10.

impelled to declare that, if God would continue with him as his guide and guardian, he would enter into his service and pay to him a regular and stated worship. Here we note the beginning of that mighty and majestic ritual, which in due time was set up at Jerusalem, and which has been transmitted, with many accretions and modifications, through priests of the Levitical order, and prophets and devout men of diverse nations and tongues, to the Christian Church. Some men have been disposed to sneer at this vow of Jacob, because he made his promise of worship conditional on the divine care and guidance, and because he promised if God would give him prosperity he would return to him a tenth part of his increase. In reply to the criticism it may be said, putting ourselves in the place of Jacob, how could he know that Jehovah was his God unless he did guide and help him; and again, where, among even the more enlightened Christian communities, have there been any that were willing to devote more than a tenth of their possessions to religious uses? Ought we not rather to feel — admitting that Jacob was crafty, that greed was sometimes an overmastering passion with him — that it was a great triumph for one walking in a light so dim to rise to so lofty a height of spiritual perception, and to set apart so large a portion of his goods to holy uses? Surely it was a point of wide departure, the initial step in that movement which has had highest significance in the religious development of the human race. Here, in the misty morning of patriarchal times, we have more than a faint intimation of that doctrine which the greatest of Israel's sons taught to the Samaritan woman, namely, that "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

After this episode, "Jacob went on his journey." By what route he traveled, or how long he was in reaching his destination, we have no means of knowing. But, if he went alone and on foot, it would have been almost essential that he should keep somewhat close to the haunts of men. Unless he had fleet camels and experienced drivers, it would be almost certain death to take the short road across the desert. Moreover, there being no occasion for haste, as in the case of Eliezer going to bring home a bride for his young master, it is altogether probable that he took the longer route by the way of the foothills, going first northerly, and then turning to the eastward as he approached Syria.

Although there is no mention of it in Scripture, it is altogether likely that some communication was kept up between Rebekah and her family. When the time came for the departure of Jacob she seemed to be aware of the condition of the family of Laban. He was enjoined to find a wife among the daughters of Laban. Jacob knew, therefore, as well as Eliezer before him, how to direct his steps in order to reach the abode of his kinsman. Familiar with the habits of the country, he did not shape his course to the well outside the city gate where Abraham's servant first met his mother. He seemed to be aware that the family of Laban was engaged in feeding their flocks in the pastures remote from the city, and hence he aimed for the well that was in the field, knowing that sooner or later someone in authority would come to the well to water the flocks. How was his heart rejoiced when he beheld the daughter of the house, the beautiful Rachel! With what eagerness he sprang forward to assist her in removing from the mouth of the well the great stone placed there for protection against the drifting sands of the desert! This surely was a momentous meeting, one of the most momentous in the history of the human race; for it was the meeting between the man whose name was to be indelibly stamped upon one of the greatest nations of mankind, and the woman who by him was to be the mother of one of the most remarkable men whom the world ever saw, the man who was to change the political constitution of the mightiest empire then in existence, and, by virtue of his authority and power in Egypt, to preserve the whole Hebrew stock from extinction. What a touch of our human nature we have here also! As soon as Jacob saw the face of Rachel he loved her with a love that never wavered nor waned to the hour of his death. That circumstance, taken in connection with the joy he felt that he had



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found at last, after his long and weary journey, his mother's kindred, completely overcame him, so that he burst forth into weeping. It was the natural overflow of feelings long pent up. Laban, when he learned that his sister's son had come from Canaan, gave him a true oriental welcome. Doubtless he recognized a marked difference between this empty-handed stripling and the rich steward of Abraham's house, who came with costly gifts to purchase Rebekah for his young master. But he keeps his own counsel, and for a month makes Jacob his guest. By that time he is ready for a bargain. By that time, too, no doubt, Jacob had given proof of his capacity. Laban asks his nephew on what terms he will serve him. In Jacob's heart there is but one desire, and that is Rachel; and so he answers that he will serve seven years for her. Some commentators say that was a common price for a man who had no money to pay for a wife. At all events, it was a price that Jacob was perfectly willing to give, and which was satisfactory to her father. He entered at once upon the service, and the seven years seemed but a few days because of the love he had for her.

At length the time arrives for the discharge of the debt arising from his service, and Laban prepares the marriage feast. But, instead of rewarding Jacob with the maiden whom he has purchased, he adopts a subterfuge and gives Leah in the place of her sister. This was possible because by the oriental marriage custom the bride goes to the husband's tent heavily veiled. Of course, Leah must have been a party to the fraud. Nor is it altogether surprising; for, while Jacob's affection was for Rachel, it is evident that Leah loved Jacob. When the latter discovered the deception that had been practiced upon him, he was indignant and called Laban to account. But Laban excused himself on the ground that the custom of the country required the elder daughter's marriage before that of the younger, and he proposed to make amends by offering the second daughter also for another seven years of service. Jacob agreed to that and took Rachel also. In a polygamous country there did not seem to be anything strange in the proceeding. But as we read the record we perceive that the marriage of the two sisters and the concubinage of the two handmaids Bilhah and Zilpah were the cause of unutterable heartache and misery to all concerned. The only relief to the sadness of the situation was the fruitfulness of Leah and the concubines, so that a troop of children came to play round the patriarch's knees. As for Rachel, notwithstanding her beauty, and the love which Jacob bore her, she was haughty, high-tempered, jealous, and petulant, and, as if it were a judgment on her for these qualities, the time of her fruitfulness was long delayed. She had been married twenty-six years before Joseph was born — a period of long and hopeless waiting, repeating the experience over again of Sarah and Rebekah — and when the child is finally given it appears to be in answer to devout supplication. We need not pause at this point over the details of the family history. Suffice it to say that we have as the total outcome of Jacob's marriages and his alliances with the concubines, Bilhah and Zilpah, twelve sons. One daughter, Dinah, is also mentioned because of certain historic relations to the patriarchal group; but, no doubt, other daughters of whom no mention was made were born. Indeed, there are two allusions to daughters.¹ But daughters were not considered of any account in the historic development of a family, because under the patriarchal system women belonged rather to their husband's family than to the family of their father.

The business of Jacob in Padan-aram was the care of the flocks and herds of Laban. It is not unlikely that he had, also, large commercial dealings. Evidently, under his thrifty and skillful management the Syrian found prosperity and profit. It was his intention to avail himself to the full of Jacob's ability and to leave him as little as possible for himself. No doubt Jacob had from the very beginning cherished the purpose of returning to the promised land, and he must have chafed uneasily as he saw that through Laban's craft he was deprived of the means of setting up an independent household. After the birth of Joseph, Jacob besought his

¹ Genesis xlii, 35, xlvii, 7.



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father-in-law to let him depart; but Laban, knowing how valuable Jacob's services were to him, refused his consent. But he made a new bargain with Jacob and unintentionally, probably, put it within the means of Jacob to become independent. Not knowing how skillful Jacob was in the breeding and rearing of sheep and goats, he was ready to consent that only those that bore certain marks should be Jacob's share. Under ordinary circumstances this would have been a small toll and the great increase would still have been Laban's. A wide space was put between the flocks in the charge of Jacob and those under the care of Laban and his sons—a fact which shows the enormous increase that had come to Laban in consequence of Jacob's energy. The separation helped Jacob's purpose. He immediately instituted devices which brought the larger share of the increase of the healthy portion of the flocks to him, leaving only the smaller and poorer portions to Laban. By devoting himself thus with great assiduity to the task he had undertaken, it was not long before Jacob began to increase greatly in wealth and power. As soon as this fact was discovered it was very displeasing to Laban, and his sons as well. Notwithstanding he was of their kindred, and was allied to them by multiple marriages, they could not brook his prosperity. But Jacob kept on, as he had now a grand object that seemed to be worthy of all his energies; and not until he felt that he had acquired enough to carry him again into Canaan with dignity, and with such power that he need not fear to meet his brother, did he relax his efforts.

Meanwhile the opposition of Laban and his sons had manifestly increased, and Jacob felt that the time had come for his departure. So, choosing the most favorable time of year, both for the driving of the flocks and for their sustenance by the way, he calls his wives to him in the field and unfolds his plans to them. Not relishing the treatment of their father to themselves, they are only too ready to assent to the proposition to depart. Therefore the proper measures are taken. The flocks are sent forward under the care of the older sons of Jacob, some of whom are already grown to manhood. Everything is made ready for a flight that will put many days' journey between them and their point of departure before the fact that they have gone at all shall become known to Laban. Then the movement begins and the sojourn of the Hebrews in Haran is ended forever. The time occupied by this sojourn is not easily computed; but in the very nature of the case it must have been a long while. Sufficient time had elapsed not only to enrich Laban and secure a fortune for Jacob, but for the birth and rearing of a large family of children. Many of his sons at the time of his departure had already grown to manhood, and he served seven years before his marriage. It is difficult to see, therefore, how all this could be accomplished in a period less than forty years. In our English version there are two references by Jacob to a period of twenty years. A scrutiny of the original discloses that these references may be to two different twenties. Putting these twenties together, we have the requisite forty years, which is the shortest possible time for the accomplishment of the results that had been achieved when the great Hebrew patriarch separated permanently from his father-in-law, and returned again to Canaan for the enactment of the scenes which, to this day, we must regard as among the most memorable in the history of the chosen people.



JOSEPH'S DREAM.

RAPHAEL.

CHAPTER IX.

JOSEPH SOLD INTO SLAVERY.

MANY important reflections are suggested by the return of Jacob to Canaan. There is one that must not be wholly overlooked. This return signalizes the complete and permanent separation between monotheism and polytheism. Abraham was called to go forth and become the founder of a new religion. He obeyed the call. Still, some communication was maintained between the migrating people and the old stock. But now, when Jacob takes his family and his substance and turns his face to the west, the sign is given for all the relations to cease. Henceforth the race is to be compacted and solidified through the descendants of Jacob, and the worship is to be of Elohim, or Jehovah, only. To be sure Rachel, who may not have been fully converted to monotheism, stole and carried away in secret her father's teraphim. This thing was done wholly without the knowledge or approval of Jacob, and upon his discovery of the images he promptly buried them. To him, scarcely less than to Moses, are we indebted for the command, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." With increasing fidelity to the end of his life he kept the vow he had made at Bethel.

Turning now to Laban, we can imagine the consternation and anger with which he learned of the flight of Jacob. A space of forty miles separated the pasture grounds of Jacob from those of Laban. Some days, therefore, must have elapsed—three days the record says—as Jacob kept his own counsel and only imparted his purpose to his wives when the plan was ripe for execution, before the tidings of the departure were carried to Laban. Preparation had probably been made by sending the flocks and herds far on, ostensibly to feed around the foothills of Western Syria. Then Jacob, gathering his stuff hastily together, mounts his wives and children upon camels and commences a rapid journey toward the land of his nativity. Before Laban could complete preparations for the pursuit Jacob was already a long distance on the road, so that, even by forced marches, Laban could not come up with him before he had passed beyond the jurisdiction within which he might compel his return. Jacob set his face toward the mountains of Gilead—the high rocky ridges that constituted the boundary between the Aramean territory and Canaan. Once there he was safe from the pursuit of Laban. This, apparently, he easily accomplished by reason of the distance traversed before his kinsman could begin the chase. The meeting between Jacob and Laban, if not friendly, is at least a meeting of treaty. Laban rehearses at length his grievances, under which there is for the most part a basis of truth. He claims that Jacob's property is his property, and that his wives, their servants, and children are his. Under the patriarchal system, all this was strictly true. Jacob himself was but an adopted son, and he could, therefore, have neither property nor family that was absolutely his own. At the same time Laban seems to recognize that the longing of Jacob for his father's house was natural, and if he were to pass out from under his authority, it would be only creditable to him that he should not go empty-handed. Therefore, he signifies his willingness to confirm him in his possessions and make a covenant with him that he will not pass beyond the boundaries of Gilead to molest him. The treaty having been made and celebrated with proper ceremonies, Laban kisses his children and departs again to his own country, while Jacob takes up his journey again toward Canaan.

But, having escaped the danger that threatened in the rear, he now begins to contemplate the peril he is approaching. He remembers that, when he passed out of Canaan forty years before, he was fleeing from the wrath of his brother, Esau, who felt that he had suffered an



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JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BRETHREN.

irreparable injury at his hands. He wonders now whether that anger has subsided, or whether, notwithstanding the lapse of years, Esau will seek to be avenged. As he goes forward he has some signs of angelic protection. The vision of heavenly ministration which comforted him long before at Bethel is repeated in a different form; and yet, not so much for his own sake and the sake of his property as for the sake of his wives and children, he is anxious to placate the heart of Esau and be reconciled to him. Therefore, he sends messengers before to announce his coming to his brother, and follows the herald by other messengers with rich presents from his numerous flocks and herds. Long ago, however, the fickle Esau had forgotten the affront that had been put upon him. Perhaps the oblivion of the unhappy event had been hastened by the fact that Jacob had gone forth with his staff only, and, as far as the patriarchal succession was concerned, Jacob had been so long absent that even that failed to make any impression upon him. He could only view the munificent presents of Jacob, the evidence of uncommon wealth, with astonishment.

Before, however, Jacob beheld the face of his brother, there occurred one of the strangest episodes of his whole career. He had sent forward in the care of trusty servants the more vigorous of his flocks and herds. Those that were unsuited for fast travel remained behind, together with the women and young children. These Jacob had seen safely across the wady, or brook, as it is called in the English version. Returning, probably for a few last things, he was overtaken by darkness and was obliged to pass the night in the valley. Instead of finding a peaceful and refreshing slumber, he was forced to an all-night struggle with a strange visitor. All sorts of conjectures have been offered concerning this wrestler. Some have supposed this was the Almighty God in the form of a man. Some have maintained that this was the divine Son of God. Others have declared that it was an angel. Still others have thought that it was not a real person at all; that it was a spiritual struggle, induced first, perhaps, by a dream, and then by the consciousness of the sin of his life. All this, however, is conjecture. We have nothing but the record to guide us, and it is pretty hard to get out of the record more than it contains. That gives an account of a real struggle, with a palpable result. Indeed, the struggle had been so fierce that in the morning Jacob's thigh was out of joint. But notwithstanding that fact Jacob had prevailed. It is clear, also, that he felt that his antagonist was endowed with mysterious power. He regarded that struggle as a new vision, teaching him that God abides not only in the heavenly glory, but in the sweat and agony of daily toil. Therefore, he rises to a new consecration of patience that will not let him forget God even in the hour of humiliation and sorrow. This is what gives him his new name and secures for him a new blessing, higher and more precious than any that comes through worldly prosperity and happiness. In obedience to Jacob's importunity, the stranger said: "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel, for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." With this new name, no longer as the supplanter, but as a veritable prince of righteousness, he goes forth to meet his brother. This is what his long years of alienage from his father's house and hard discipline with Laban have wrought in his character.

It is delightful to observe that the meeting with Esau is one of amity and affection. All vestiges of hostility and hatred appear to have vanished from the brother's heart. He bids Jacob a cordial welcome to Canaan and urges him to accept his escort into the presence of his father. But Jacob excuses himself. He has under his immediate charge the more tender portion of the flocks and the women and children, and he must proceed slowly. Indeed, he is incapable of pursuing his journey by reason of his lameness. He remains, therefore, where he is at the forks of the river where there is both pasturage and water, and even builds booths for the shelter of the herds, which betokens a residence of some permanence. But when he is recovered from his lameness, he moves forward as far as Shechem, which was the first camping ground of Abraham when he came into Canaan. It is here that all the implements of the



H. VERNET.

DIPPING JOSEPH'S COAT IN THE BLOOD OF THE KID.

idolatrous Syrian worship are gathered together and buried. Here, also, he purchases a piece of ground for his tents and for an altar. This shows that the country was somewhat settled—to what extent we cannot tell, but probably from the nature of the event recorded as taking place here, not very numerous. Dinah, the only one of his daughters whose name finds mention in Scripture—although, as has been said, it is probable from certain statements that there were others—went out of the camp, probably in secret, to see the daughters of the land. She was beguiled or captured by the son of the chief man of the city and dishonored. This produced a crisis. Two of her brothers by the same mother, Simeon and Levi, felt themselves called upon to avenge the wrong that had been put upon her. Accordingly by a stratagem, aided no doubt by the more warlike portion of their father's servants, they put to the sword the whole city, and either killed or captured the greater part of the inhabitants. This act naturally filled the mind of Jacob with consternation and horror. He believed that after such an outrage it would no longer be safe for him to remain in that place. It is likely that he feared, although his sons were victorious, either that the friends and allies of the defeated Shechemites would attempt to avenge the indignity that had been put upon them by reprisals, or that the surrounding tribes, mistrusting the object of his advent into Canaan, would make war upon him for the purpose of exterminating him or driving him back into Syria. Gathering his possessions together he passed on to Bethel. His march was unmolested, the occupants of the land, perhaps, being filled with fear because of the relentless slaughter of the Shechemites. At Bethel he kept the vow which he had made to God when he beheld the vision of the angels ascending and descending between earth and heaven. Here Deborah, the beloved nurse and servant of Rebekah, died, and was buried under what was thenceforth called the oak of weeping. This circumstance leads to the conclusion that Jacob had already visited his father in Hebron and had brought Deborah back with him. No mention is made of the death of Rebekah, perhaps because many years had elapsed since the event occurred. It is impossible to suppress a feeling of sorrow that the woman who had sent him forth to her brother's house to find a wife could not have survived to welcome him on his return to fulfill the destiny which she had been so important a human instrument in marking out for him. The stop at Bethel does not appear to have been for long. Evidently Jacob was pressing forward to get near to his father who still survived, although at a great age. On his way to Ephrath, which was as near as he could come with his immense retinue to Hebron, when he had reached Bethlehem, Rachel travailed and died in giving birth to Benjamin. Thus the woman whom he had gone out of his father's house to seek, whom he had loved with tender and unfaltering devotion for more than forty years, was never to receive the welcome of that house. Truly the afflictions of Jacob were beginning to multiply, and were fast becoming as numerous as his blessings. But he had learned, through fiery discipline and trial, to believe in God in sorrow as well as in joy. This was a mighty step forward, not only for Jacob, but for the human race.

Isaac died at 180, when Jacob must have been 120. He was buried by his sons, Esau and Jacob, in the cave of Machpelah, where had already been buried Abraham, and Sarah, and Rebekah. To this august list in due time was to be added the bones of Leah and Jacob's own body, embalmed in Egypt and borne thither by a mighty caravan with all the pageantry and pomp that could attend the burial of a prince. But a dozen years before the death of Isaac there occurred an event of far greater significance to Jacob and the people that were to bear his name. The firstborn of Rachel's children, when Jacob came to Ephrath, was a lad of seventeen. As the child of his first and only deep love, he was exceedingly precious, and was distinguished in many ways above the children of Leah and the concubines. Doubtless it seemed to the other sons that his father already designed him for the patriarchal succession. This of itself would be sufficient to excite their animosity toward him. There were doubtless other reasons for their jealousy. One of the worst phases of polygamy is that the children



H. WARREN.

JOSEPH'S BROTHERN SHOWING THE COAT OF MANY COLORS.

invariably champion the cause of their respective mothers. We know that Leah, at least, had great cause of enmity toward Rachel, and it is altogether likely that both the concubines had an even stronger reason to hate the haughty mistress of Jacob's affection; and, while they might be very cautious about manifesting their animosity openly, their children would not be so backward. But in addition to all these reasons there was another, still more potent. Whoever reads the story with any attentiveness must see that Joseph was an uncommon youth. He was already engaged in those meditations which are the sure tokens of genius. He was superior to his brethren, not only in the affection of his father, but in his intellectual endowment. The vision that he had of his brethren doing obeisance to him was only the expression of a preëminence which they must have recognized already. It is scarcely to be wondered at that his brethren should have formed a conspiracy to kill him. Of course, it was a horrible crime; but we have already had some taste of the bloodthirstiness and relentless cruelty of at least a portion of Jacob's children, who lived in an age in which fratricide was common, and very lightly regarded if the victim were born from a different mother. Every indication of the superiority of Joseph only whetted their wrath toward him. It is said "they could not speak peaceably unto him," and as their hatred grew they formed a conspiracy to put him to death. His father having sent him to Shechem, where they were feeding the flocks, to make inquiries concerning them and bring him tidings, they proceed to put their plot into execution. Had it not been for Reuben, who, whatever other faults he had, was not bloodthirsty, Joseph would have been murdered ruthlessly. But through Reuben's entreaties he was merely stripped of his coat of many colors, which his father had given him as a token of his special affection, and cast into an empty cistern that was in the field with the intention, doubtless, of leaving him to perish with hunger, although it would seem that Reuben cherished the purpose of rescuing him. In the absence, however, of Reuben, the others, at the suggestion of Judah, concluded to sell him as a slave to a company of Ishmaelite merchants who were going down into Egypt. This was done for twenty pieces—probably shekels—of silver, equivalent to about twelve dollars of our money. Then the coat which they had taken from him was dipped in the blood of a kid, and taken to his father as the proof that his son had been killed by an evil beast. Jacob does not appear to have suspected the brethren of Joseph, and he accepted the bloody garment as adequate proof of the death of Joseph. He said, "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." Surely there is no grander touch of human nature than this in all history. Human ingenuity could not invent anything that would afford such commanding and invincible proof of the genuineness of the story.

At this point the interest of the narrative shifts. Instructive accounts of other members of the patriarchal family intervene. But the real interest centers hereafter in Joseph. The mind is drawn irresistibly to follow the fortunes of the slave lad, in the hands of an alien race, going to do service in a strange land. What an awful thing that one born to freedom and high privilege should be sold like an ox! But such was oriental slavery. Such is slavery everywhere. There is this to be said of ancient slavery in general, however, and of oriental slavery in particular: The door to freedom was not absolutely shut. The fact that one was a slave was no bar to even the highest station, provided one had the genius for it. We wonder what was in the mind of the Hebrew youth as he found himself a bondman going down to Egypt. Doubtless he thought that preferable to being in the hands of his cruel brethren. It is, moreover, true of all great souls that they are indifferent to their surroundings. As far as the record goes the condition of Joseph from the moment of his captivity onward seems to have been one of perfect serenity. On the arrival of the caravan in Egypt Joseph was sold to

Potiphar, a high officer of the court, and appears to have been almost immediately placed in charge of his household. At first we are disposed to marvel at that. But perhaps it is not so strange after all. It has been generally supposed that the time of Joseph's arrival in Egypt was during the reign of the last of the Hyksos, or shepherd kings. These kings were probably of Aramean descent, very closely resembling Hebrews in their physical characteristics, and, some have thought, in their language. As far as race went, therefore, Joseph was under no disability. Possibly the Ishmaelites may have told how they came into possession of this slave. At all events he probably showed that he was well born and bred. Undoubtedly he manifested, even in his servitude, some of those rare executive abilities for which in mature life he was so distinguished. Potiphar made him his steward and intrusted him with everything. He used the trust so well that all the business of Potiphar prospered in his hand.

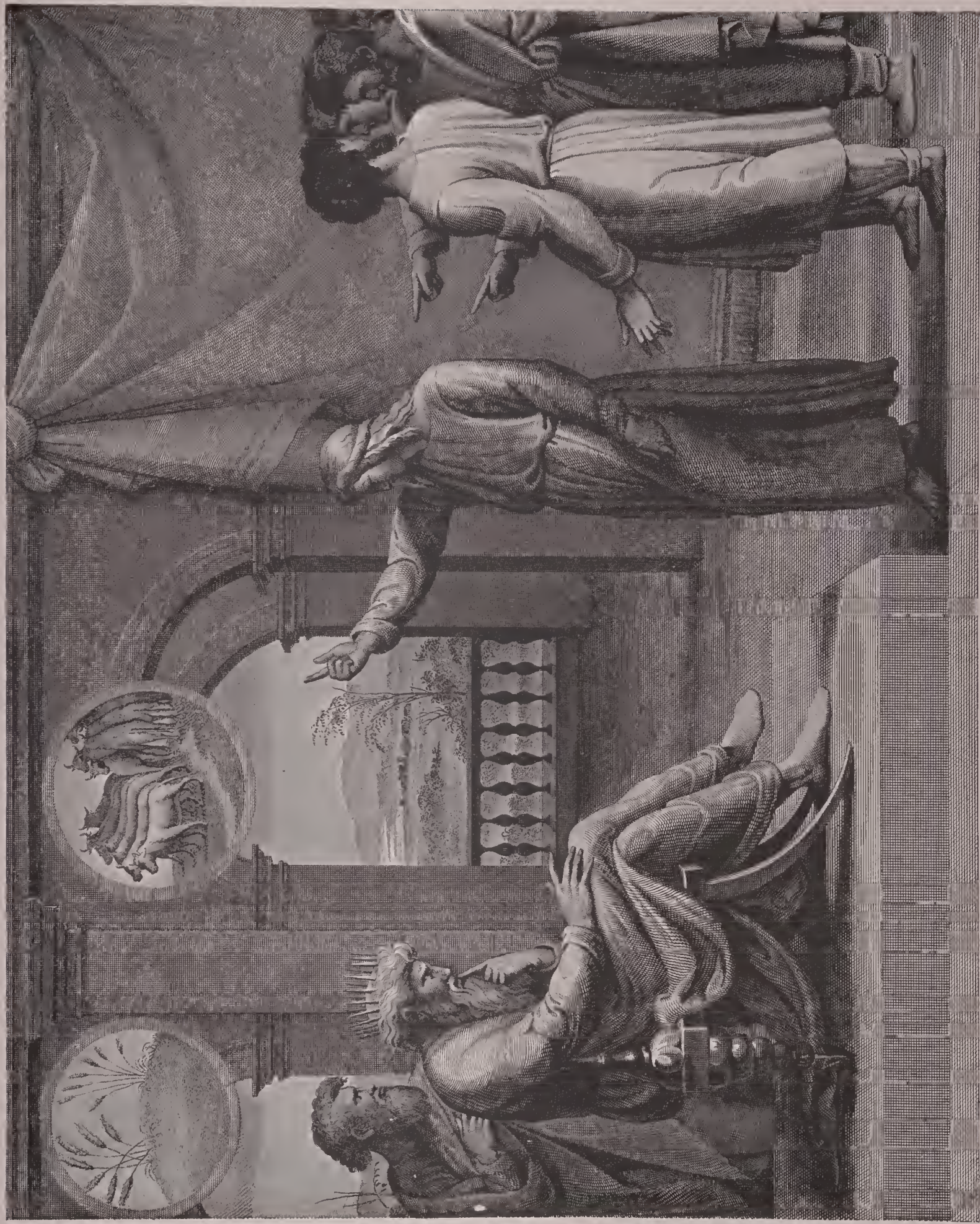
This continued until Potiphar's wife falsely accused him of attempting upon her an infamous crime. Whereupon he was thrown into prison. There is ground for believing that Potiphar distrusted the accusation of his wife against Joseph, inasmuch as he exalted him in the prison, and gave him charge of all the prisoners. Here, then, again we have evidence that great minds are but slightly affected by their surroundings. Genius will manifest itself in slavery and in prison. There are no bars that can circumscribe or confine the expanding and soaring mind. With the coming into the prison of high officers of Pharaoh, Joseph had an opportunity through the interpretation of their dreams to convey, though after the lapse of years, to Pharaoh what manner of man he was. The time came when Pharaoh sorely needed someone to interpret a dream that was troubling him greatly. The wisest men of the realm had tried it and failed signally. Then it was that the chief butler remembered the service that Joseph had rendered to him when he was in great need. He told the story to his royal master and Joseph was immediately brought forth from the prison to give that wonderful interpretation which made him prime minister of Egypt, with power to introduce a policy of taxation which changed the constitution of the realm. Here certainly was a marvelous exaltation — a young man lifted from slavery and prison to be the second person in the mightiest empire on the face of the earth! The act of Pharaoh, however, proved to be one not merely of caprice. The Hebrew boy showed that he was worthy of the vast responsibility and power that had been placed in his hands. He saw at a glance the danger that threatened Egypt. He devised the measures that were necessary to avert it. With plenty of practical wisdom such as belongs only to the highest order of statesmanship, he proceeded to put those measures into execution. With unparalleled foresight he began to fortify the State against the long famine which he knew was sure to come; and when his brethren, who, in their hatred, had tried to destroy him, next saw him, he was so installed and intrenched in the confidence and affection of Pharaoh that there was none mightier than he in all the world.

CHAPTER X.

JOSEPH'S CHARACTER—ARRIVAL OF HIS BRETHREN—COMING OF JACOB.

JOSEPH was thirty years old when he came into power in Egypt. Supposing him to have been seventeen when he was sold into slavery, he must have been thirteen years in servitude. He was a devout soul, true to the religion of his father. He attributed everything in his career to God. He looked to God for counsel, and he knew that God guided him in all things. Reading the story as we do at this distance in time, we see, perhaps, even more clearly than he could the ruling hand of divine providence in making the wrath of his brethren a testimony of God's righteousness, and lifting him from a position of servitude to almost unlimited sway in Egypt. It is inherently incredible that such results, with such far-reaching and beneficent consequences, could have been accomplished by human ability alone, however transcendent. But to say this does not derogate from the extraordinary acumen of Joseph. He was in every way fitted by natural endowment, and by discipline and training, for the great responsibility he was called upon to assume. Even in his childhood he gave evidence of uncommon genius. His brethren called him a "dreamer" by reason of his meditative and prophetic spirit. Even then he was forecasting the future; even then he saw how his life, by reason of certain qualities that were stamped upon his mind, was separated from and lifted above the common life around him. Unquestionably these qualities were, to some extent, developed by suffering and by the exercise of that self-reliance he was compelled to exhibit in the difficult and trying positions in which he was placed as the servant of Potiphar; so that, in the supreme crisis of his life, when he was summoned into the presence of Pharaoh, he could, with the aid of the divine counsel, not merely interpret a dream, but could show a larger wisdom, a profounder knowledge of statecraft, than the most learned, experienced, and trusted of the Egyptians.

Instantly, therefore, Pharaoh saw that this was the man of his counsel—the man for the office and the hour—to institute and carry to perfection the reforms that were essential to the preservation of the empire. With a boldness such as is not often manifested by rulers in this world, Pharaoh resolved to make him the instrument of the work he had to do; and, that there might be no possibility of failure, he placed in his hands unlimited authority to carry out his purposes. Moreover, in actual trial Joseph showed that he had the qualities for which his master had given him credit. The details of the policy inaugurated by him are not, as far as we know, given in the Scripture or elsewhere. What the mummy cases and monuments yet to be unearthed have to reveal no one can tell. All we know is that this new minister, chosen and exalted by Pharaoh, went forward, laying a new and heavier tribute upon the people—which does not seem to have been hard for them to bear, by reason of the great harvests and the consequent prosperity of the nation—and laying up a store against the time of predicted famine. The means he adopted were so wise, so salutary, and so effective that the course could but command the approval and even the admiration of Pharaoh. Indeed, we are compelled to believe from the way the account runs that the more the monarch knew his minister the more he esteemed him. As far as appears during the whole of the life of either of them, nothing occurred to interrupt the harmony of their relations, or to weaken the confidence of the monarch in Joseph. They seem to have been even on terms of intimate and close friendship. Nothing that Joseph could ask was withheld. Pharaoh was instrumental in assisting him to enter into marriage relations with an Egyptian woman of high family. All



JOSEPH INTERPRETING PHARAOH'S DREAM.

this is testimony of the strongest sort to the extraordinary character of Joseph as a statesman and a man. In the ranks of great men of the ages, probably few have equaled and perhaps none have ever surpassed him.

Of course, Joseph's policy was most triumphantly vindicated by the coming on of the years of the famine as he had predicted. As the years went by his astuteness was attested still further when it was seen that through his foresight Pharaoh was able not only to preserve the lives of the people but to secure such concessions from them in regard to their estates as would strengthen and confirm his power, weakening the authority of the nobles and petty princes and making the people directly dependent upon him. Pharaoh, therefore, had reason for the deepest gratitude and most abiding affection for Joseph. It is conjectured by many authorities that the monarch under whom Joseph wrought was the one who planned and carried to execution the system of dams and other devices designed to regulate the flow of the Nile. It is not improbable that the suggestion of these works came from Joseph himself, and perhaps he was the officer intrusted with their construction. Certainly no one would be more likely than he to recognize the causes of the protracted droughts to which Egypt was periodically subject, or to conceive of the measures requisite to prevent their recurrence; undoubtedly the prediction of years of drought was based, to some extent, on the past experience of the nation; and it is but reasonable to suppose that the man who had the capacity of such wide observation and large induction would be the one of all others best fitted to consider the means of prevention. Moreover, having, as the minister both of agriculture and finance during the years of the nation's plenty and prosperity, gathered together and compacted the surplus wealth of the nation, he would be the one vested with the resources necessary for the inception and carrying out of so vast an undertaking. The strongest *a priori* considerations, therefore, point to this reign, and even to this extraordinary man, for the conception and consummation of the improvement that was of such immense and far-reaching consequence to the prosperity of Egypt. But for the confirmation of these conceptions we shall be compelled to wait for what the researches and discoveries of scholars may reveal to us. The wreath which the record alone puts upon the brow of Joseph is ample for his future and abiding fame. By appeal simply to the record, we see that he was not only the savior of Egypt but of other peoples as well. We are told that "the famine was over the face of the earth," and that, besides the Egyptians, "all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands." The primary cause of the dearth in Egypt was, of course, the failure of moisture in the mountains from which the Nile receives its supply of water. Such a cause would, in the nature of the case, be widespread in its operation. A failure of moisture there would be accompanied by its failure in a much wider area; so that we perceive that people far removed from the borders of Egypt would in the same manner, and perhaps to an even greater extent, suffer from the effects of the drought. Still further, as this drought was a protracted one, confined in its operation not to a single year, but spread over several years, the suffering would become widespread and terrible, causing the surrounding countries to look to Egypt for relief. It was to be expected, therefore, that Canaan would be affected with the other countries. Indeed, Canaan often suffered from an insufficient supply of moisture. Abraham had been compelled to go down into Egypt on account of famine in Canaan. Isaac had been driven as far south as Gerar to find water and forage, and would have gone into Egypt had he not been restrained by the divine hand. It is not strange, therefore, that Jacob should have turned in the same direction, in his distress, for relief.

It will not be without profit to go back a little in our narration and see how it has fared with the patriarch since Joseph was taken from him. At first, as we have seen, his sojourn was at Ephrath. Here, within a convenient distance of his father's abode, he busied himself with the care of his flocks and herds, receiving the active assistance of his sons. His object was

evidently to strengthen and compact his fortunes so as to make ample provision for his numerous family. In due time Isaac died and "was gathered to his fathers." Then Esau, who had for the most part resided with his father, removed to the region of Mount Seir, and Jacob removed to Hebron. What was done with Isaac's possessions the record does not state. Whether they were divided between Esau and Jacob, or whether the fact that they had fallen mainly to Jacob was the principal reason for his going to Hebron to reside, we cannot tell. But we do know that the years were full of sorrow for the patriarch. The loss of Rachel had filled the whole remainder of his life with sadness. The loss of Joseph he felt to be irreparable. Then, too, somewhere in these years, not only Isaac, but Leah, to whom he doubtless turned with more affection after the death of Rachel, died and was buried; so that he must have felt that he was in a passing world. In addition to this, he must have been troubled more or less about the succession, and was casting about in his own mind to determine which of his remaining sons was best fitted for the great trust. There is reason for believing that the sons, after their great crime, and especially after observing the terrible sorrow it had produced in their father, were somewhat chastened and were more disposed to do what they could to lighten his burdens. Hence there was some compensation in his manifold afflictions.

Then came the famine, and Jacob saw the fruit of all his years of toil and anguish likely to vanish away. The flocks and herds were like to die for want of sustenance. Sickness, which is one of the inseparable accompaniments of famine, was doubtless beginning to assail his servants, and possibly his children. The sons were beginning to "look one upon another" with a kind of superstitious dread. They were beginning to feel that a terrible calamity — perhaps total extinction — was impending over them. But Jacob's heart never failed in emergencies. He had the quality of all great souls, which triumph in adversity. The more terrible the threatened evil, the more irresistibly his courage rises to meet and overcome it. He who had wrestled all night with the mysterious stranger at Peniel and come off victorious, although he carried marks of the conflict that would follow him to his grave, was not likely to be dismayed by famine. So when he sees the anxiety of his sons he bids them go down into Egypt, where there is still an abundance, and buy food for their households.

In obedience to their father's injunction, all the sons except Benjamin went down to Egypt. Benjamin was kept at home to comfort and care for his father. Since the loss of Joseph the heart of Jacob had turned with increasing fondness to the only remaining child of Rachel. He did not feel, therefore, that he could quite spare Benjamin for so long and dangerous an expedition. The question may arise why it was necessary for so many as ten to go. The answer is plainly that the number of people to be relieved, not to speak of the flocks and herds, was very great, requiring a large supply of grain — much larger, no doubt, than appears from a casual reading of the record. It was unquestionably the large and important caravan coming from a distant country like Canaan that secured an audience with the minister of the realm. Possibly he had been expecting their advent, and was on the lookout for them. As soon as they came into his presence he knew them. They had changed but little. He had grown from a mere lad to a man in middle life. Clad, too, in the robes of high office there would be nothing in his appearance to suggest to them the stripling whom they had sold to the Ishmaelites fifteen years before. As they bowed in abject humility before him he was reminded of his dream in Canaan for which they had upbraided him. Yet in a measure his heart yearned toward them. He was impatient to get tidings of his father and his younger brother. By harsh treatment and compelling them to give an account of themselves he learns what he desires to know — that his father is still alive and that Benjamin is the stay and comfort of his old age. Then, while he grants their request for food, he insists on keeping one of their number as a hostage that the younger brother shall be brought down. Evidently his desire is to see Benjamin his own mother's son. But while he seems to be so harsh and relentless, in reality he is very tender,

concealing the money which they had brought to pay for their food in the grain which they were to carry back.

Having left Simeon behind them in prison, and being commanded to fetch Benjamin, they returned with heavy and downcast spirits. When they reported to Jacob what had befallen them he was filled with consternation. But he could not part with Benjamin. Not until the famine began to press sorely again would he even discuss the subject with his sons. Indeed the cry he uttered when they proposed to take Benjamin and go down again must have cut them to the quick. "Ye have bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me." Still the exigency became more and more imperative. "The famine was sore in the land." Though he had resolved that Benjamin should not go down with them, the time came when Jacob was forced to consider the question. Indeed, it was getting to be a matter of life and death. While there was apparently some food for the live stock, enough to keep them from perishing altogether, yet for human beings there was nothing. The crops had failed and food must be had. Jacob, therefore, urges his sons to go down again. But they are resolute, because they are sure it will be a hopeless journey unless they can take Benjamin.

After a feeble opposition Jacob accepts the inevitable, and the brethren go down again, taking their youngest brother with them. It is pretty evident that Joseph had awaited their coming with some impatience. The eagerness with which he made arrangements to receive them at his own house shows how his mind had dwelt on the reception of Benjamin. Indeed, he finds it hard to suppress his feelings in their presence. The uneasiness of their consciences, on account of the great wrong they had done to him so many years before, takes away all resentment from his mind. He distinguishes Benjamin in so marked a manner above all the rest that it is a marvel that some hint of his identity did not flash upon them. But apparently they had not the faintest suspicion that it was Joseph. How strange it must have seemed to him to hear them talking in his own vernacular of himself, his father, and all their home affairs without once imagining that he could understand them! But he restrained himself and made no sign. He preferred, in true oriental taste, to make the announcement in a more dramatic fashion. He orders his steward to conceal his drinking cup in Benjamin's sack and when the brethren are well on their journey he sends after them and charges them with theft. They, of course, are indignant, and make some very rash promises in case it shall be found in the effects of any one of them. A search, of course, reveals it with Benjamin. Now they are completely undone, and return to the house of the minister with hearts ready to break. When it is proposed by Joseph to retain Benjamin in custody because of the theft, then they unfold the whole story of their life, showing how deep their contrition is for their great sin, how they have sought to make amends for it by superior devotion to their father, and how deeply they are troubled, not so much by what has befallen themselves as by the sorrow that will come to him. Then Joseph can restrain himself no longer, but, sending out all the attendants from the room, he makes known to them that he is Joseph. Naturally they are more troubled than ever, for now they are in the presence of the man who has an unbounded right to punish them. But he reassures them, saying, "Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land; and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God." How splendid is not only the magnanimity of this man, but his faith in the one living and true God! It is hardly the voice of human wisdom speaking in him, but the voice of prophecy, as if his tongue had been touched by a living coal from the heavenly altar. The strange worship of the Egyptians, though he had married the daughter of a priest, had not turned him from the

simple faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but there, in a strange land, far from his kindred and his father's house, he was true to the religion which Abraham had been called from Ur of the Chaldees to set up and maintain, and which he himself had received as the grandest inheritance of that majestic line of patriarchs.

But now he bids them hasten and be gone. The eagerness which he before had to see Benjamin is intensified to see his father. He bids them report to Jacob his state and power in Egypt, and urge him to come with all speed, disregarding his substance, because out of the abundance with which Pharaoh has rewarded him he can supply all his wants. With what feelings of mingled shame, humility, and joy they must have taken that journey back to Canaan! Now they must make known to their father, who had never suspected them of wrongdoing, their perfidy. Now their consciences are smarting for the evil they have done. There is no more striking instance, in the Bible or elsewhere, of the certainty and terribleness of retribution. "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." We may remember in this connection that not only in the hour of Joseph's revelation to them, but later on when Jacob was dead, the consciousness of the wrong they had done to their brother revived and overcame them in his presence, showing that a wound had been imprinted upon their spirits which time was almost powerless to heal. At the same time there was a surpassing joy in their hearts because Joseph had not shown any resentment to them, because they were going to save their families and their flocks and herds from destruction, and, above all, because they were carrying to their father the tidings that Joseph was alive. One can hardly doubt that, when they thought of the transport of delight that would take possession of Jacob as they should break the news to him, they could scarcely keep their feet from flying over the ground. The record, however, gives us no details. We are told in the briefest possible terms that they went back to Canaan. Still the Scripture does not fail to tell us that, when they reported to Jacob that Joseph was alive and that he was ruler over all Egypt, the father could not believe their report. It was only when they had told him their story with particularity of detail that he was convinced. Then his soul overflows, and his joy breaks forth like a song of triumph. "It is enough; Joseph, my son, is yet alive; I will go down and see him before I die." Then preparations for the journey were made. The several families and all their belongings were gathered together and all went forth on what may well be called a new migration. For, though Jacob called it a sojourn, and doubtless thought it was to be only for a few years, centuries were really to elapse before any of the stock of Israel should again see Canaan. The steps of the company were directed to Goshen, a rich pasture ground on the northeasterly side of the Nile, and there Joseph went in his chariot to meet his father.

CHAPTER XI.

JACOB AND PHARAOH.

THE land of Goshen was well adapted to grazing. Notwithstanding the drought which was prevailing, there was much low ground in that region that yielded a coarse herbage that would sustain the flocks. It was, moreover, an unsettled country, and there was room in abundance, both for the animals and the people. There were other reasons for not taking the company of Israelites into the more settled parts of Egypt. A great prejudice — growing, perhaps, out of the fact that the reigning dynasty, which was a usurping dynasty, belonged to the shepherd race — existed against shepherds. For some reason Pharaoh does not seem to have shared the prejudice of the Egyptian people. It is hard to account for this except on the ground that he inherited a different tradition and belonged to a different race from the Egyptians. At all events Pharaoh desired to see Jacob. This may have been an act of courtesy to his prime minister. But it is more likely that some fame of Jacob had reached his ear and he desired to see him and perhaps talk with him. So Jacob is sent for to come into the presence of the monarch of Egypt. One can hardly repress a smile as he detects in the narrative a kind of condescension on the part of Pharaoh. Doubtless there seemed to be a wide disparity between them. Pharaoh ruled over the greatest empire in the world, and his word was law everywhere within his dominions. Jacob was only a humble Canaanitish shepherd. But the really great man, the mighty prince who had power with God and with men, was Jacob. The very name of the Pharaoh has perished, and the wisest scholars are still in doubt as to the dynasty to which he belonged. But the memory of Jacob is green. Wherever man worships Jehovah his name is revered, while one of the most remarkable races the world has ever seen traces with pride its lineage from him. Instructed by Joseph beforehand how to behave and what to say, Jacob, when asked, gives some account of his life and blesses Pharaoh twice over and goes out. Pharaoh is evidently well pleased with Jacob and his sons, and readily not only grants them permission to take up their abode in Goshen, but requests that the more capable among them be appointed to have charge of the royal herds. Thus begins the long residence of the chosen people in Egypt which is to end only when Moses shall lead them forth from bondage to freedom.

The history of Jacob and his sons is now drawing to a close. Indeed, we may conceive that in the main the great patriarchal mission had been fulfilled. It is exceedingly grateful to feel, also, that after all his trials he was to have a long season of profound peace. The children of Jacob, if they reflected at all, must have seen that by the over-ruling power of Jehovah, the evil which they meant had been turned to good. It must have been a joy to them to witness the comfort and happiness of their father as he drew near to the end of life. To be there so near his favorite son, to live under his protection and to observe his exaltation and power, must have afforded him a satisfaction such as few men in this world have ever been privileged to feel. He richly merited it, too, after all his years of suffering and sorrow. No doubt the growth of the family in Goshen was rapid. Though it was not the part of Egypt best adapted to the more settled forms of agriculture, it was, as has been said, well suited to grazing, and the flocks and herds would naturally multiply rapidly. Being, also, near a great market, the breeding operations must have been a source of profit. The increase of the population must also have been very marked. Indeed, it was no small company of people that went down with Jacob into Egypt. The record mentions nearly seventy. But this enumeration

embraces mainly the male descendants of Jacob — only two or three women find any mention whatever. Nearly all these males were married and brought their wives with them. Moreover, it is hardly reasonable to suppose that Jacob had not as many female descendants as male. But these could not have constituted the whole body of people that went with the patriarch to settle in Goshen. We must not forget the great body of servants, who spoke the same language and were largely of the same blood. If Abraham, in his time, could arm 300 men "born in his house," how can we well suppose that Jacob was the head of a smaller tribe than his grandfather? It is impossible to account for the princely character ascribed to Jacob except on the supposition that he was the head of a numerous band. The term *Israel*, as applied to the people, meant a great deal even then. Nor can it be inferred that all the people of kindred speech and blood came down with Jacob from Canaan. We know to the contrary. There were the descendants of both Ishmael and Esau, in great numbers, left behind. Any of these coming down to Egypt would naturally come through the land of Goshen. Thus the great Hebrew colony would be in the way of important augmentation, so that in the very lifetime of Jacob there must have been a vast expansion of the population, justifying in a purely worldly sense the high honor that was bestowed upon him as a prince at his death. Those seventeen years of Jacob in the land which Pharaoh had assigned to him were of the highest significance, and must have afforded to the brethren of Joseph a lesson of the profoundest meaning. They must have felt that, indeed, a nation was growing up that would bear the name of their father, and would have an important part to play in the history of the world. It is unlikely, however, that any but Jacob himself realized the religious import of what was going on. He doubtless meditated deeply upon it. With prophetic vision he saw much of what was to be. He foresaw something of the bondage that was coming, and understood the conflicts and trials through which the Hebrew race was to attain its glory. He recognized, as no one else could, that the hand of God was not only in his own life, but in the life of the people, to the end that the blessing promised to Abraham, and repeated to Isaac and himself, might be fulfilled. There are some indications that he had even a Messianic forecast and conviction. He never lost sight of Canaan as the ultimate home of the people, as the place where the ultimate glory of Israel was to be achieved and where the promise of God to him and his ancestors was to be fully entered into.

Accordingly, as Jacob's strength failed him and the time was manifestly drawing near when he must die, he sent for Joseph. The desire of his heart was not to be buried in Egypt. Following a great instinct of our nature he wanted to appoint the place where his bones should finally repose. There was the tomb of his fathers in Hebron, the field, and the cave therein, which Abraham bought of Ephron the Hittite for a burial place for Sarah, and which was the only piece of ground which Abraham ever owned in the land that had been given by divine promise to him and his seed after him forever. In that tomb were buried Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah and Leah, and Jacob desired to lie beside his kindred. Possibly there may have been a higher reason in the divine purpose. Jacob's body was to be embalmed after the manner of the Egyptians. If that body has lain undisturbed where it was deposited by Joseph and his brethren the world may yet behold the face of the great patriarch, as it has looked upon the face of Rameses II., the great Pharaoh who oppressed the Israelites, and who, by the cruelties he instituted, compelled them to seek once more the Canaan of their promise. It is impossible, of course, to tell what the Mosque at Hebron covers. In view of the ages of violence that intervened between the burial of Jacob and the setting up of a stable government in Palestine there is every possibility — perhaps probability — that the tomb has been rifled. Still, there is also the possibility that the graves have been undisturbed, and if so, when that territory shall come under the control of Christian powers, there is awaiting the supreme moment of discovery a contribution to history and archæology surpassing anything that has

yet been discovered. Think what it would be to look into the mummy case of Jacob and to read the mystic symbols inscribed upon it by order of his almost royal son! There is not an archæologist alive who would not give the best years of his life for such a privilege.

But putting all this aside, for reasons that are perfectly natural Jacob desired to be laid in death in the cave of Machpelah. As the time of his departure drew near he sent for Joseph, and Joseph came. We can imagine him coming in royal state, in a chariot such as we see figured upon the monuments. A retinue of servants undoubtedly accompanied him, and very likely, also, an escort of soldiers. His coming must have been an event in Goshen, and whenever his brethren saw his glittering equipage they must have remembered the dream in which their sheaves bowed down and did obeisance to the sheaf of Joseph. On his arrival in his father's chamber, Jacob makes known to his son his last wishes and said unto him, "If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt. But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying place. And he said, I will do as thou hast said. And he said, Swear unto me. And he swore unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head." This, however, was not the last interview of the patriarch with Rachel's elder son. Some time probably intervened between this vow of Joseph and the final scene in Jacob's chamber, when, after setting Ephraim the younger of Joseph's children above Manasseh, and after blessing Joseph and giving him above his brethren as a portion the field of Shechem, he called unto him his sons, and said "Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father." This was the last and most impressive of all the colloquies of Jacob with his descendants. Indeed, the prophecies which he then uttered are among the loftiest and most impressive of the recorded utterances of man. Though Jacob is in the last extremity of life he showed his sense of his son's dignity by strengthening himself and sitting upon the bed to receive him. Then he proceeds, in prophetic language, not only to sketch the characters of his several sons, but to point out the career which is to be achieved by their descendants. The most remarkable of these prophecies is that relating to Judah, the fourth son of Leah. "Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: his eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk." Whether Jacob was fully conscious of the import of his words or not, there is not in the Old Testament a passage of clearer, stronger or more emphatic Messianic intent than this. "And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people. And Joseph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kissed him." Then the process of embalming the body, occupying forty days, took place. When that was completed the funeral procession was prepared. "The asses and camels of the pastoral tribe," says Dean Stanley, "mingled with the chariots and horsemen characteristic of Egypt." A martial escort such as would one day accompany the remains of Pharaoh himself to their resting place in pyramid or rock-hewn tomb, began its long march from Egypt to the banks of the Jordan bearing the dust of Israel, "the prince of God"; and for the last time the Israelites looked upon the familiar scenes of the promised land until, centuries after, led by Joshua, their posterity should come to take possession of it and build therein a nation.

At this point we might very properly draw the curtain, having followed the story of the patriarchs from that point where Abraham was called to part from his kindred and his father's

house, that he might set up an altar of worship to the one living and true God, to the final gathering in of Jacob. Indeed, there is not much more to tell. On the death of Jacob, the fears of the brethren naturally revived once more. Now that their father is no longer present to plead their cause, Joseph may call them to account for the evil they did. But he reassures them again that God was in the event, directing and guiding it for a great and noble end. Moreover, he gives evidence that he is a true Israelite and not an Egyptian, by exacting from them a promise that his bones shall be carried up to Canaan when their posterity shall go up to enter into their great inheritance. Joseph's life was prolonged after his father's death for fifty years, during which time his brethren prospered under his protection, and the colony grew and multiplied amazingly. What happened after that no man can now tell. But it is pretty well understood that about this time a revolution occurred in Egypt. The dynasty to which the Pharaoh who befriended Joseph belonged was overthrown and there succeeded a new dynasty, which did not recognize the obligation of Egypt to Joseph for his industrial wisdom and foresight, his financial policy, and his marvelous system of public works. Nay, if, as is now commonly supposed, the Pharaoh who gave audience to Jacob and showed no resentment when he told him that the business of himself and his brethren was about cattle, belonged to the Hyksos dynasty, or, in other words, to the Hittite race, nothing would be more natural than that the new occupants of the throne should identify the Goshen colony with them, coming as they did from the same general region of country and speaking, perhaps, a kindred language. That was how, it is most likely, the oppression began, gradually, at first, by a curtailment of privileges and by a displacement from a post of honor to one of contempt, but growing more insulting and onerous from year to year and from generation to generation, until their complete enslavement was effected. So slowly was the pressure brought to bear upon them that no restraint was put upon the fecundity of the people, and they grew and multiplied at such a constant and steady rate that, in the time of Rameses the Great, they had become so numerous as to appal by their very numbers the Egyptians themselves. Indeed, if we were to give credence to the account of their oppressors, their habitations had become so overcrowded and their habits in consequence so objectionable, that leprosy was with them a national disease, so that Pharaoh, in self-defense, was obliged to exclude them from his dominions. Doubtless there is some truth in this Egyptian view of the case. Still, until indisputable evidence is given to the contrary, the Scripture account must stand. Judging by that, it is true beyond question that the stock had suffered great deterioration physically, intellectually, and morally, by reason alike of their numbers and their privations. But while there are instances of leprosy among them—both Moses and his sister being afflicted with it—the disease does not appear to have been general or widespread. On the contrary, it is clear that the hand of God was in all their affairs, and that in like manner as he brought them down to Egypt to “save life” and secure the beginning of a nation, so, though it were through tribulation and anguish of spirit, through humiliation and contempt, through disappointment and deferred hope, he was bringing them forth again to become a great people and play a mighty part in the salvation of humanity.

As to Joseph, it must be said that he does not belong to the order of the patriarchs. Though Jacob, in the partiality of his thoughts and affection, would have gladly made him his successor, though he did all in his power to exalt him above his brethren, yet by the evident design of God he was compelled to occupy a distinctly lower place. Neither the power nor the glory of Israel in the great story of its development is traceable to Ephraim but to Judah. Yet there can be no question that he was a divine instrument set to accomplish a divine purpose. He fully recognized himself as such. His strange experiences must have that interpretation, or they must remain without rational interpretation forever. Many writers have delighted to trace certain resemblances between Joseph and Jesus. But it is most doubtful whether there is any just warrant for such treatment. It is true he was the best beloved son of his father; that he

had in his youth wonderful visions which almost betokened conversation with God; that he bore his sufferings in meekness and without reproach; that in prison he waited for the hand of the King to exalt and lift him up; that he descended from Canaan — which, in both Jewish and Christian thought, has ever been regarded as the figure of heaven — to Egypt; that he went down into that pagan realm, even as Jesus went to hades; that he suffered his bones to remain there in the hope that his brethren would in due time carry them back to Canaan. Doubtless some of these resemblances were of prophetic import. Doubtless, too, in a higher sense than any other Hebrew from Abraham to John the Baptist, Joseph was the spiritual ancestor of those who were to constitute the kingdom of God. But it is not wise to press these analogies farther than they will bear. It is better to accept him as a man, on the natural side of his life, of the most extraordinary intellectual, moral, and spiritual equipment. Few men have ever lived who could stand beside him as his equal. In this respect he is a true descendant of Abraham. Yet no man can candidly study the record of the Book of Genesis without perceiving that he is more than that. He is scarcely less the favored and favorite son of Jacob than of God himself. He was raised up to do a work without which not only would Israel have perished, but the very way by which the Son of God was to come into this world would have been torn up and destroyed. No doubt God would have found other means of declaring himself to the world, but this was the means chosen and as such deserves our thoughtful and devout attention. So everywhere throughout this wonderful story of the patriarchs and their children, from the call of Abraham to the bondage of Israel, the tender but steadfast and triumphant purpose of Jehovah runs like a golden thread, ever becoming more distinct, and bright, and glorious as we steadily behold and profoundly examine it.

Elmer H. Cohen



HAGAR IN THE DESERT.

BOOK IV.

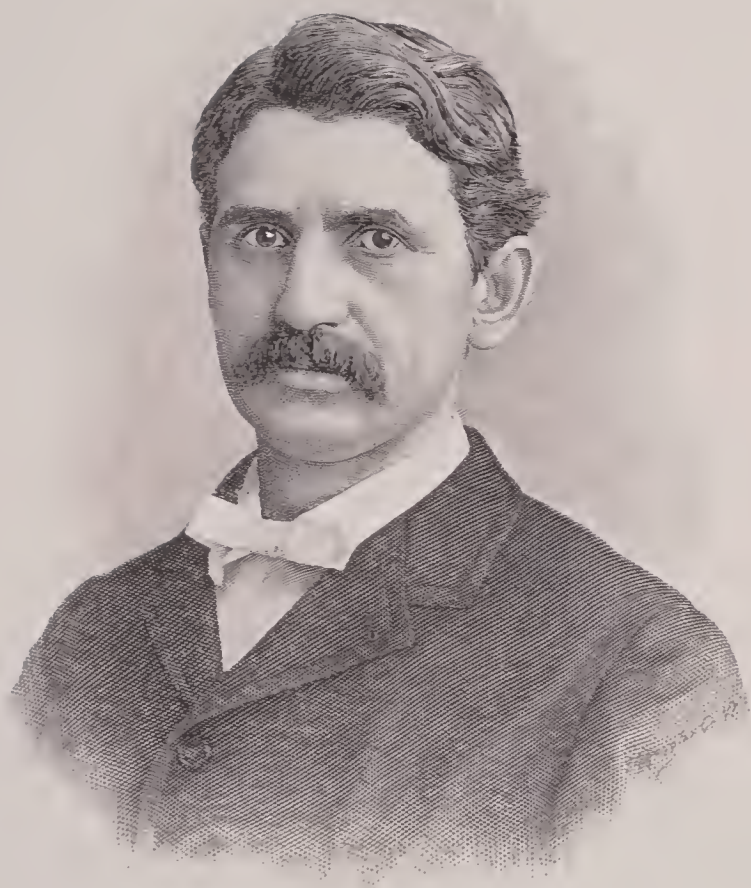
FROM THE BIRTH OF MOSES TO BEGINNINGS OF FREEDOM.

BY

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Johnsant

BOOK IV.

FROM THE BIRTH OF MOSES TO THE BEGINNINGS OF FREEDOM.

CHAPTER I.

“THE CRADLE OF THE HEBREW NATION.”

THERE are two majestic silences in the story of the Bible. One stretches from that hour whose chronicle we have in the closing words of the Book of Genesis, to that later hour, separated from the earlier by three hundred and fifty years, with which the Book of Exodus opens; the other, four centuries long, measures the distance between the utterance of the last prophet in the Old Testament and the outpoured melody of angels at the birth of Jesus in the New. In the lights and shadows of this first silence, we behold dimly outlined by the side of the dreamy Nile and the solemn pyramid, revealed only by the flash lights of a few short sentences written in a later period, the almost formless Israelitish host, around them that strange air invested with the purposes of Almighty God, and over them his distinct word of promise: “Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation.”¹ Recent readings of ancient monuments, the deciphering of moldering papyri, the pages of the Greek historians or Egyptian priests, vie with that magnificence of nature and of art which salutes the modern traveler, and that indubitable record made in the life and character of Israel, to show how admirably Egypt at that hour was fitted to be “the cradle of the Hebrew nation.” The gift which, Herodotus says, was made to humanity by the Nile, was a seed bag containing the world’s former harvestings.

The significance of all nature blooms into its fullness in the life and destiny of man. The equatorial rains creating the sluice-way for their outflow to the Mediterranean were ministers of him who sees the end from the beginning, and the delta thus created, as the torrents faded with the recession of the Nile, produced a civilization as opulent and various in its forces as were those material deposits on whose fertile surface it grew and flourished. But without a soul like Moses, and a people educated to be led forth by such a leadership, despite what civilization had thus far achieved, these unrelated and unimpersonal energies were impotent. Egyptian life and idealism were able to preserve only as a memorial and a school for some divinely inspired people this wealth of the past, and this splendid present rapidly identifying itself with the past.

One of the facts which were certainly invalidating the intellectual and moral power of the throne of the Pharaohs to deal hopefully and in statesmanlike way with the possibilities of land and population was this enslaved mass of Jews. No other race could have contributed a multitude of bondmen so likely, even in the opinion of the Egyptian, to rebel, to incite trouble, and even to bring about revolution. For ages, Egypt and Israel had been hostile on every field. For centuries of Israel’s sojourn, Egypt had beheld the people grow, develop a fierce independence in numerous predatory excursions into Canaan, and exhibit a far-sighted mastery of radical ideas. Taxes and burdens of incredible weight, seizures of ancient rights guaranteed

¹ Genesis xlvj, 3.

by Joseph, and offenses against their old dream of freedom under God, only served to intensify a proud spirit of revolt. The oppressors feared the oppressed, as they were seen to assume new dignity with each new outrage visited upon them. The system of slavery was working its own destruction, largely by enslaving the throne with a wholesome dread of the enslaved. Conservatism, such as held visible empire but failed of real supremacy, then and there did, and always, indeed, does count up its traditions and wealth, its franchises and institutions, with such self-bewilderment that all young and righteous opposition, especially if it be in chains, appears as did the agitation of the American slave question in 1850 even to Daniel Webster, who called it a "rmb-a-dnb" agitation. Ancient privilege and crowned wrong are always being asked by the progressive and radical Christ of history to behold its institutions, while he says: "See ye not all these things?" and, because they are *things* and man is a *soul*, the Christ of history adds somewhere and sometime: "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."¹

Egypt was rich in "*things*." She had wealth of soil and unbounded capacity of production. If ever slave labor may be called cheap—a proposition which the history of every slave-holding dynasty refutes—then did Egypt have cheap labor, which, with abundant food easily obtained from the luxuriant breast of nature, helped to make her a dowered queen in the company of half-fed oriental peoples. As day by day the spirit of freedom, grown up out of a sense of God's purpose, brought them nearer to the hour when the pilgrim children of Israel should look back upon all the past, there was deepening a richer material background, not the least impressive of whose elements was the Nile, teeming with fish, lakes brilliant with the plumage of birds, great stretches of garden land furnishing "the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic"; roadways trodden by caravans of laden camels moving between fertile and succulent pastures, and the yellow wheat fields in which the shepherds of Israel had become agriculturists; wide channels for irrigation, near whose banks flourished the fig and date trees, and over whose enriching currents bended the sycamore and the palm. That portion of Egypt in which Israel was cradled and trained might well be worthy of the praise which the reigning Pharaoh bestowed upon it, when he addressed Joseph, calling it "the best land."

In peace and war, commerce had added large wealth, material and mental, to Egypt. In the fourteen dynasties which had lived and perished before Joseph's day, ships had entered the harbors from every land; the beer of Galilee came in Palestinian galleys; cattle and rare woods, furs and perfumes, negroes and precious metals, were floated down the Nile to her cities; the products of Libya burdened the dusty caravans. The Nile valley had always been attractive to the shepherd tribes. Cushites and the nomadic races joined with Phœnicians, and probably Syrians, to open this opportunity to enterprising power. The conquered Hittites contributed vases of gold, artistic material and products for temple and residence, war chariots and woven silks. Egyptian greed never forgot the hour, when, under the powerful Thothmes, she imposed tribute, like some earlier Rome, upon the whole world. Fourteen campaigns against Western Asia have left a record of their booty on the walls of the temple at Karnak. Even Ethiopia was despoiled of treasure. But, greatest of all the gifts for the future of humanity, the commercial spirit at its basest moment had given to this land, Joseph to be Grand Vizier; and now in his bones was Israel's imperishable hope.

To her own thought, Egypt had a finer wealth than all this. This very district is its fragmentary memorial. Ghostlike and sublime, the gigantic wreck of a great artistic life is beheld in the multitude of sphinxes and columns which dot the weary monotony of sand. The ancient canal is dry, but the granite features of the king still command from the company of the gods. While the wealth of turquoise from the mines of Sinai, or gold ore from the desert of Nubia,

¹ Matthew xxiv, 2.

was borne slowly upon the Nile, and large dykes guarded the arable land, architecture had already employed millions of human beings, in the quarries, at the cataracts, with huge instruments of engineering, with fine tools for cutting and polishing, to complete the most astonishing results that now challenge the wonder of our race. Abraham had probably mused and pondered there of the strength of man, as sixty pyramids rose up to assure him that certainly the princes of Pharaoh were descendants of men of power.¹ Joseph had beheld a whole realm of art in the multitude of sepulchers and huge relics—the burial place of kings and cities. Sanctuaries were there whose wilderness of columns and overwritten walls were only surpassed in splendor by their vast and gorgeous approaches. For ten centuries the pyramid of Cheops had given promise that, twenty centuries later, western culture might look upon it with increased surprise. The one city, Memphis, the capital, was so magnificent as to continue its fascination for a millenium and a half, until the Father of History might be taught within her walls. Obelisks and pillars, giant statues and wonderful carvings compel the belief that still finer and grander was the capital of the Middle Empire, Thebes, while the City of the Sun remained at once the religious and educational metropolis, a veritable Vatican of priests and an Oxford of scholars, the memorial of Joseph's love for the Egyptian maiden and the spot where the Hebrew student was to become "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians."² Like the sphinx itself, cut from a single enormous rock, stands out for the amazement of to-day the unique art-movement of this people.

Egypt was the college of the nations. Here was the academy in which the Platos and Bacons of the period held high converse—the birthplace of what is most attractive to the intellect in all human culture. This very fact was wealth. Egypt had the haughty self-confidence which sprang from the fact that her people were the most refined and cultured, if, indeed, they were not the only educated people in the known world. Greater than the builders of the capacious granaries and oil cellars, more deft and subtle than the artists of the wardrobes of all her thousand dignitaries in religion and government, partially accounting for her unmatched engineers, astronomers, chemists, architects, physicians, and philosophers, were Egypt's common-school teachers, a republic of primary pedagogues, which made her able to give to the first-grade boy in our schools his arithmetic as easily as she gave back to Greece her Pythagoras, but not until he was able to send a Plato to the City of On. A lettered class was formed of the scribes. The priest was the instructor. From the knowledge of the scales of notation, the student advanced to geometry and trigonometry. Civil engineering and mechanical engineering point to the aqueducts, and the huge stones lifted to their places in pyramids six hundred feet high, as proofs that the Egyptians understood not a little of their secrets. It is contended that their astronomy has left its memorial in the great pyramids; and it is certain that the year of three hundred and sixty-five days and a quarter was measured with a scholarship equal to our own. Our metallurgists have not scorned the blowpipe and bellows used at Thebes. The hydraulic engineer does not disdain the practical Egyptian's siphon; and the Israelites themselves became witnesses of what Egypt could give to slaves, in quite another direction of applied science and art, as they afterward manufactured beautiful works in gold and silver, embroidery and the setting of gems.

Egypt had government and religion. A long line of able rulers, a most brilliant career as a progressive people and the instinct for organization had furnished her with political traditions and revered methods of procedure. Herder insists that her pyramids and sepulchers are to be considered proof that her people had reached a misery and degradation incredible to us. Certainly, however, at an earlier time, very vital and energetic must have been the autonomy and self-dependence of the population to have produced such a specimen of what is called "a strong government."

¹ Genesis xii, 15.² Acts vii, 22.

Ancient paintings and sculptures reveal a high and firm civilization, as perhaps the earliest. At the time with which we are most concerned, Egyptian statecraft and politics added much to the richness of that background against which we may behold the portrait of Israel. The power to enslave foreign peoples was almost equaled by the finer strength which wrought out of dissimilar populations such results as were achieved for government when Egyptian scribes, by a dominance of ideas, reconquered the rude shepherd kings. Such a warrior as Amenemhat I. enabled his successor to found such a city as Heliopolis. Her kings builded fortresses at the south and reservoirs for the Nile, while her priests crowded the cloisters with students. Her multitude of officials and her elaborate court ceremonial are to be considered along with a developing literature, a prophetic art-movement, and the career of a Thothmes who made Egypt the center of the world. Yet it was a statesmanship which dealt less earnestly with man than with "things."

As much may be said of her religion. Rich enough to contribute to Israel, it was, like her statesmanship, to afford by contrast a startling picture of the inherent supremacy of even an enslaved truth. If it had granted woman a high place, it had preached pious exercises of almost shameless beastliness. If it enthroned the Invisible and fostered some lofty ideas of God, it could deify cats and crocodiles, and prostrate itself before a golden bull or a chattering ape. Osiris might sit in the Judgment Hall of the Two Truths, himself a picture of justice; but vice was rampant under the blessings of the priesthood, and in the use of the Ritual for the Dead, while confession was made of the truths of divine self-existence and the soul's immortality, the pilgrim soul, on escaping a debased body, protested its virtue and righteousness. All this huge anomaly was made gorgeous in magnificent temples, musical or eloquent in a rich service, vital in the eager orthodoxy of countless priests, inclusive of astonishing achievements of science, and identical in methods and hope with a powerful government.

Against all these, wrapped up in the form of a helpless baby, lying in tears amidst the tall flags and lotus blossoms of the Nile, were the unredressed wrongs of a whole people, and the purposes of the unforgetting God. As a man-child of manacled Hebrewdom, he encountered the command of Pharaoh in the first breath he drew: "*Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river.*"¹ Doubtless many sons had perished, as mother after mother sighed near the bank of that river where a large portion of Israel had its dwelling; but the cause of the oppressed had not been drowned, and here, at this moment, that cause was identical with divine providence and human pity in saving for the leadership of the bondmen, Moses, the Captain, the Lawgiver, the Prophet, and the Emancipator of his people.

¹ Exodus i, 22.



THE MOTHER OF MOSES.

CHAPTER II.

THE YOUTH OF MOSES.

WHEN Amram was joined in holy wedlock with Jochebed, there was consummated an alliance of great significance to human history. The name Jochebed was one of those anticipations, of that of which much has elsewhere been said—Israel's perpetually widening and enriching revelation of the character of God—a prophetic revelation of the covenant-making Lord, of whom Moses, their son, was soon to have a fuller vision—for her name means "*She whose glory is Jehovah.*" Amram, whose name signifies "*Kin of the High One,*" was of the tribe of Levi, the offspring of Kohath, who was the second son of the head of the Levitic priesthood. Any child of this marriage, therefore, belonged to the truest aristocracy of God. This blood had thrilled to the commands and inspirations of the purest faith. Their creed was continually alive with promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Almost alone, amidst the corrupting influences of Egyptian mythology and worship, the tribe of Levi had kept the faith. Already, Miriam and Aaron had been born, and the daughter was a grown-up girl of twelve or fourteen, the son a child of three, when God blessed their union again, and Moses, a child of "exceeding fairness," lay in his mother's arms. Probably Aaron had come to them before the inhuman tyrant had issued his desperate command that the male children of Hebrewdom should be drowned. But, here and now, motherhood meets this dreadful order with her fair babe. Three months of hiding her child made Jochebed more heroic in her faith in God. Trusting the "eternal womanly" in woman, she really trusted God. There were the growing rushes; they could be made into a waterproof ark by the use of slime and a coating of pitch. Silently and lovingly Jochebed might deposit the treasure of her love and hope in the Nile's shadows amidst the bulrushes. There Pharaoh's daughter would come to bathe with her attendant maidens. And there—it was motherhood's dearest dream—the child would be safe, because of God. Then occurred the most marvelous of "the marvelous things" "in the field of Zoan."¹ No vicious crocodile infested its beautiful waters, almost shadowed by the ancient royal residence; and, as the princess bathed, the cry of the babe, which she could not yet interpret as the cry of an enslaved race through her to God, came to her pitiful soul. The Egyptian Ritual for the Dead compelled any spirit to answer at the last: "I have not afflicted any man: I have not made any man weep: I have not withheld milk from the mouth of sucklings." Besides, in spite of the evident fact that this, by Pharaoh's law, was a doomed child of the hated and feared Hebrews, here was a woman's responsive heart ready to reëcho the baby's cry. Humanity has shaken many a dynasty into dust. At the moment when the discovery became a problem, and Pharaoh's daughter was perhaps pondering the words: "I have not withheld milk from the mouth of sucklings," the sister, furnishing for all ages a delicately and strongly drawn portrait of true sisterhood, naively offered the love-begotten proposition that some Hebrew woman be asked to nurse him. What the Nile-god had given to Pharaoh's daughter, the Almighty One had first given to Jochebed and Hebrewdom. Consent was easily obtained; the mother of Moses was chosen—and that night he lay in Jochebed's bosom.

Ebers has devoted many of his brilliant sentences to the description of the appearance of the princess, who probably was, as he insists, none other than the sister of that young Rameses who was at that time associated king with Seti I. Traditions and inscriptions give her the names of Thermouthis and Merris. It is of more importance that Moses, whose name signifies "*Taken from the water,*" became, in due course of events, a member of the royal household.

¹ Psalm lxxviii, 12.



PHAROAH'S DAUGHTER AND THE CHILD MOSES.

Here, and at the institutions of learning frequented by such distinguished youth, he was to be "instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." He had soon entered the priestly caste. We have already referred to the fact that Egypt was herself a university in which every docile youth was matriculated. To know Egypt, as any bright young boy would know that superb memorial and grand workshop of scholars, was to be "learned." But Moses was vouchsafed all the unique advantages which were offered by the throne and the priesthood in which he was at least a novice. He trod the cloisters and sat in the lecture rooms where intelligence was imparted from the lips of illustrious professors. He mused in the libraries where eminent scribes were reproducing for such bibliographical museums as that of famous Alexandria was to be, the results of human thought and discovery; he was inducted into the art of song and the knowledge of the sacred physicians and astrologers, horoscopers and idol dressers, amidst the perpetual pageant of the palaces and the temples; but, more important still, he became the scholar of the "*Wisdom of Egypt*." This was the sacred possession of a small circle of the intellectual and religious aristocracy. Into the secrets of that treasure, of which we learn both so little and so much from the glimpses of Greek and Roman philosophers hundreds of years afterward, Moses entered with such docility and thoroughness that, through all the pilgrim march, at Sinai, and in his earnest appeals in the wilderness, he is still the debtor to the culture obtained in the land of his youth. Probably the university at Heliopolis took him for a large portion of his youth from the imperial palace, but it was only the residence of a king's favorite at the spot where more kingly minds than Pharaoh's contributed their science and philosophy to his large and open soul. Along with this, another culture grew. Amram and Jochebed and Hebrewdom, through solemn memory, ancient psalm, and inspiring promise, had obtained the start of the throne and the university of the City of the Sun. The mother's knee is the altar at which the child-soul makes the sacrifice of itself to the learning which is life's chief resource and highest commandment. Against all this culture from Egypt, over it and through it, supple and strong enough to master and to use it, was the home culture of the Hebrew hearthstone. Then and there came what Principal Fairbairn calls "the conflict of the two natures, the native and the acquired in him; the victory of the Hebrew over the Egyptian."

On one of those days when slavery sullenly vaunted its hateful prerogative, the patriot Jew flashed forth from the scholarly courtier, as afterward William the Silent was to rise, with a sword in his hand, from out the sometime easy-going and compliant inmate of the palace of Charles V. One of the native masters was beating a Hebrew slave. In his wrath, Moses slew the Egyptian taskmaster. Of course, this conduct was murder, and it courted death as punishment. It separated him from his brethren. He added to his crime, in the eye of the Egyptian law, for, by concealing the corpse, he had prevented embalmment; and Egypt believed that the soul of the dead could not enter heaven. Nothing but exile remained for Moses, if he desired to live. Away to the craggy Sinaitic peninsula he hurried for refuge. The Almighty One was guiding Israel in every step which Moses took. Elsewhere, especially if he had fled to the south of Palestine, the authorities, acting under the Hittite treaty, would have returned him an extradited prisoner. No; God would acquaint Israel's emancipator with that set of facts of which neither Amram's household nor Egypt's university possessed the required knowledge. The Moses of Israel's emancipation was to need all he could acquire of the knowledge of Sinai. Barren Midian is better, at this stage in the education of any Moses, than Thebes or On, or even the feast of the Jews. Cromwell must drain the fen country. So did God give Washington the English colonial territory to win, or to survey, before and after Braddock's defeat, that he might save it to the cause of the Continental army; so also did God educate Lincoln in the Midian of Kentucky, where he could know American slavery and survey the actual intellectual and spiritual territory through which he was to lead a race to the Canaan of liberty — a Canaan which, like Moses, he saw from afar as he died on Nebo.

Here in Midian, where he met Abraham and Keturah's wandering descendants, the man Moses, now forty years of age, was certain to obtain, not only from the nomadic race, but also from the vast solitudes of nature, a nobler and clearer idea of the Almighty One. Moses was full of fiery quality which was to temper his character, while now and then it burst forth, as it did at one of the ancient wells. Base and insulting shepherds had offended the daughters of the priest of Midian, driving away their flocks. The chivalric Moses protected them with a strong hand. Every such act deepens the soul's receptiveness for the truer vision of the Eternal Righteousness. Out of this came the invitation to their father's house and the marriage of Moses to Zipporah, his daughter. Slight indeed is the record of those forty years; but there is much evident, though it be unrecorded, history in these silences. Zipporah afterward proved to be strong-willed and high-tempered; and with her the soul of Moses was wifeless. When at length he went to Pharaoh, Zipporah was sent away. Doubtless the house of the rich sheik, Jethro, served Moses best, as it sent him back into the resources of his own spirit and the worship of God. His two sons seem by their very names to indicate that, while there, he was also exiled from the real business of his life. Their names were *Gershom*—"banishment"; *Eliezer*—"My God is help." All this while, Moses was moving toward God and divine destinies. Here were the Horeb mountains and there was Sinai—to them he would return. Here he was making definite and larger the knowledge of that land, many of whose valleys and heights, roadways, wells and streams would, at a future day, challenge or assist his ability to lead a nation to liberty. Those sandstone hills, purple and red in their craggy sublimity, lit by every variation of light; the vague and wide desert, less barren then than now; the numerous wadies, shadowed by pinnacles and cliffs; the eagle flying with her young—these all deepened the solemnity of human life; and the musing man found here the majesty of God. All of these, like so many nourishing forces, prepared him for that event in whose mysterious lights the Hebrew nation found its torch lit for revolution.

CHAPTER III.

THE BURNING BUSH AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE.

"AND the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God."¹

Such is the divine narrative of the event most genetic and formative in the character of the Hebrew chieftain. Moses never before had an intelligent hold upon himself; never before had he a just conception of how his own life took hold of other lives and bound itself up with the fate of human society and the reign of God in the world. In the vision of God he gained the vision of himself. It is interesting to study the inner life of Moses before the vision of this burning bush and afterward. Nothing in the whole Bible, so truly as this, gives the portrait of a man's spiritual self in those moments of mingled hot-headedness and indifference, before he

¹ Exodus iii, 2-7.

finds God and himself in some hour of vision, and the portrait of that other self when by that vision he has become an intelligent and conscientious force which knows no wasteful outburst of energy nor has a moment in which its constant vitality is not at work. Years before he had felt, in that unintelligent way in which men feel the pressure of great wrongs, the atrocity of Egyptian bondage, and when the Hebrew was receiving the cruel stroke, he dispatched the Egyptian taskmaster. It was an unregulated outburst of indignation which, so far as we know, did not leave a single great purpose in his heart. Indeed, it had left him poorer in all the requirements of a constructive reformer, rather than richer. There is always something enervating and dissipating in those fire-sweeping movements of the soul, when the blaze has not come from a great flaming truth or a torch-like principle lighting men on to a definite goal. Moses fled from the court of the king, and after years of love and exile, wherein no word is spoken, so far as we know, of the mighty problem which he encountered in that beaten slave, and which he does not seem at all to try to solve, we find him an oriental shepherd. He is well married; why should he trouble himself about the great world and its perplexing questions? He reclines on the soft turf and sees the feeding flocks of a rich father-in-law; why should he worry about the people who are unfortunate enough to be in slavery? Let the fanatics take care of those matters. He once was all on fire, too. And he thinks, as he looks out from the mountain-side over the delightful valley, that his enthusiasm cost dearly enough. But yet, before that wretched self-content which keeps many a well-housed son-in-law and many an untroubled man from being of service to his race—just before that self-satisfied, comfortable and easy life puts its crown on—the native man in this shepherd wakes to behold the vision of God, the burning bush, the revealing omnipotence of righteousness, and the glowing but perpetual victory of truth.

Many a man has had all this experience, save the recognition of the burning bush. He, too, has been living in a world full of sin, and cruelty, and crime. In his ardent youth, he has seen some proud iniquity beat its slave, and he has hurled himself against it to put it out of existence. There has been no great principle at the bottom of his act; no peerless truth lay like a revelation in his soul; no profound righteousness shone like a star above the swelling anger of his indignant spirit. And that experience of trying to help the world has left him much less strong. It has exiled him from the very society in which he might be expected to shine. It has so thoroughly impressed him with the littleness of his power and the loneliness of his effort, that he is half ashamed that he has tried to do anything at all. Like Moses, domestic life is probably his chief concern. To be well fed and well clothed mean more than they meant then. To have a respectable income, even if it comes only by a fortunate marriage; to be sure of an easy, quiet life; to muse about nature, and, at a great distance, to pity the unfortunate—these are now of priceless value. When men talk about enthusiasm and the flaming truths of God, it is enough to remind them that once he was on fire too, and that he burned out with great rapidity; that these glowing moments are very brilliant, but full of dangerous heat and consuming flame. His dead Egyptian did not save Israel. But here Moses is transformed. He has found God; he has found himself. Before, he was easy and content; now there blazes in his spirit the flame of glowing truth which shall furnish ensigus for the great revolution. No longer shall the beautiful pastures enchant his spirit; no foot of land shall be but cursed to him so long as Egypt bears the footstep of a slave. Before, he was isolated and knew no feeling which made the life he lived and the life his kinsmen lived one; now the full responsibility of humanity is upon him, and, with a consciousness of being in the presence of God, the luxuriant and selfish individualism goes out as the true personality comes into him. How strange was everything! Over the splendid sky under which he was delightedly watching the flock, was written, "*Let my people go!*"¹ On the rock against

¹ Exodus v, 1.

which he leaned, or in whose shade he fell asleep aforetime, blazed the words, "*Let my people go!*" Into the playful brook and along the rapid river on whose banks he had stood in easy grace and pastoral mood, there sounded the alarm to Pharaoh, the tocsin of war to the Egyptian throne, the first movement of freedom to the hapless slave. "*Let my people go!*" God had revealed himself, and Moses was a transformed man.

Truth will burn, and by its burning illuminate, yet it is inconsumable; principles will flame with living fire and make the very air to glow and quiver with heat, yet they are indestructible; right, love of God and love of man will blaze in their significance and tremble with their withering or beneficent fire, but they will know no consumption or waste; they cannot be reduced to ashes; they are as eternal as God. That little thorn bush which Moses saw has gone down into history as the teacher of these things. But it is not alone. Wherever any noble creature of God has seen the truth, which, through a thousand heated struggles, has burned its way into the air men breathe and perpetuated its existence while it made the tropics in some polar region of public sentiment, safe after all the fury of fire, still standing and still burning with a divine glory—there has been the vision of the burning bush. When any soul has seen a flaming principle, which, through dark and dismal times, has sent its illumination afar, still blazing after the eyes of men have been entranced by its revelation, waiting while it glows with the fervor of God to light up a new era, or scatter the darkness of some new danger—there has been the vision of the burning bush. Wherever the quenchless right which has trembled with fire divine through long ages, and warmed the damp air and made bright the landscape around it, still is seen to abide in the furnace heat of its old splendor and wait to rouse men to new duties—there is the burning bush. Wherever some great heart feels the inextinguishable love of humanity which has felt the drenching rains of centuries of doubt and despair, and still believes that man is God's child, and still is ready with the old inconsumable enthusiasm to brave defeat and endure danger for man's sake—there the burning bush of Moses stands, and there a new Moses finds God.

Israel here found her greatness through the experience of her greatest soul. The revelation of himself in the commonplace is one of the most interesting facts of God's dealings with men. And the more we see of the nature of this burning bush, the more we discover of the fitness of this characteristic of the event. If that point in every man's history, where he becomes the true and earnest man he ought to be, is where he is fascinated with the permanency and missionary quality of truth, and right, and love, it is certain that God must get him to feel all this, in perfect independence of the circumstances in which it comes to him. To be great, a nation through its leaders must see God in the least of its events. There was just as much in the episode with the Egyptian to make a reformer; there was just as much of principle and righteousness involved as there was in the burning bush. Why did the bush arouse this man? The answer is: God was in it, to the eye of Moses. Of course, the years lying between had trained his vision to depth and spirituality. Never before did Moses see God shining in the truth that he was to use through that whole revolution; never before did he see the Omnipotent One behind the impersonal principle, which, because it was unilluminated and cold without God, had not yet roused him; never before did he know that *his* love for man was *God's* love for man in him. God might have spoken to Moses by some great event, in some huge way, which would have fitly shown how vast God's hand or voice was, but that would not have found the interior and essential Moses which the exigent future would demand. Moses had work before him to do, as has every man, of the sort which is not to be done by a soul whose sight is not fine enough to discover the significance of that flaming little bush, whose ear was not deft enough to catch the voice which spake in the midst of its flame. It must be a "great sight" to him. Never has there been a great leader, or a real helper of men, who has not been able to see that truth, principle, right, each is one. That eye alone can see the larger

which sees intelligently the less. A man must know the infinity inside the right, burning but inconsumable, which is trampled upon, or struggled for, in the least conspicuous event of human life. He must be able to see the divine self inside the principle which shines above some little transaction of man with men. He must know the God in the right, or the truth, which is begging for championship in some insignificant occurrence in the whirl of business, the rush of trade, the movement of society, the action of each man toward his neighbor. To see that, is to see the burning bush.

God's training of the eye of Moses began where, by his grace, all training for great deeds ought to be begun. Give the child, Israel, the ability to discover the presence of God as ruler, as judge, as inspirer, in every truth, every principle, wherever he finds it; let him learn to hear the divine voice speaking out of it, in the very least event where the right burns and is not consumed—and his soul is fitted for the loftiest duties of the earth. When he comes to Sinai's thunder and lightning, his foremost man, Moses, shall understand them.

It is very characteristic of so rare a spirit as Moses that he should say, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." For when Moses first noticed it, it was simply "a great sight"—a flame which did not consume. Every quality of mind, which the study of his after-life reveals, was aroused. Always the deeper the nature the more genuine is its wonder, the more profound is its sense of mystery. Just that questioning advance which Moses made toward that bush will be made by any true soul, when first it sees, somewhere along life's pathway, some principle flashing with flame and blazing with heat in some contest of right with wrong, and yet yielding nothing to the combustion, losing nothing in the fiercest fire. He is a dull man who, unlike Moses, does not feel that it is thus far "*the great sight*" of his life.

Israel, through Moses, met another method of God the moment he advanced toward the bush. God said to him what, at some time in the study of such mysteries, God says to every thoughtful soul: "Moses, Moses." He touched for the first time the *personal self* of the Hebrew leader with his own personal self. "*Here am I,*" said Moses. In his discovery of God, Moses had found himself, as every soul must. Then comes into action the old method of God with the human soul, when he says to it: "This mystery is the mystery which inheres in me and my presence in the good, the true, and the beautiful. It is not yours to understand, but to *use*. You are standing on holy ground now. Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet." The use of this inspiring wonder characterizes the life of Israel, and that alone differentiates Israel from all other ancient peoples.

It is a great step in the progress of any soul, or nation, toward the practical, useful understanding of God, when it obeys this voice from out the heat of the flame. Many a soul stands by that bush and loses all the benefit of God's revelation of himself in the good, the true, the beautiful, blazing yet unconsumed, because it will not recognize that the mystery of it is to be *used* as a mystery, not to be analyzed into the category of life's comprehended facts. God says to our speculation and rationalism: "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet." It is profanity, and no soul or nation is deep, so long as it is irreverent and unawed. Heaven pity the soul or nation which, especially in its beginnings, has no holy ground. After all, it is the reserve of all noble life. Men and governments are great by the length and breadth of "holy ground" in their lives.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MEMORIAL NAME AND ITS INFLUENCE.

IT is not too much to say that the majestic possibilities afterward unfolded in the character of this people inhered in the call of Moses which was communicated to him before he returned to Egypt. "The great events of the world," says the penetrative Amiel, "take place in the intellect." The author of the kingdom of love, himself a refashioner of man's life and conduct by means of inculcating a larger and truer conception of God, always spoke of the divine order of progress as "from above." First, "the new heavens" of thought and worship, then "the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." "Progress," says Hegel, "first in the idea, then in the thing." This consideration, so variously stated, helps us to see that the resource which every great and reforming soul draws upon for strength is that which he calls supreme—the power that rules the worlds. The character and potency of *that which governs* is the base of supplies for every soul undertaking a task worthy of himself. If the task is greater than any preceding it, it is so partly because it involves greater truths. It must, therefore, call upon deeper fountains of inspiration and guidance. Every Moses makes new tasks command him, and every Moses goes deeper into the nature of God for the supply of his intellectual and spiritual necessities. God discloses some hitherto unknown tract of himself: He renames *Moses* by renaming himself in the experience of his prophet. This is the significance of that episode in the life of mankind—for his was a contribution to the race's theology and statesmanship—in which Moses beholds the burning bush.

Nothing can excel in simple strength the account in the Bible:¹ "Now Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, unto Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Amorite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. And now, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: moreover I have seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be the token unto thee, that I sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them,

¹ Exodus iii, 1-16 (Revised Version).

The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you ; and they shall say to me, What is his name ? What shall I say unto them ? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM : and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you : this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations."

All these incidents led, with that naturalness which characterizes the divine method of education, to an event of the supremest importance. The hour had come for God to give to his servant a new name for the supreme power above him — a name so profoundly related to the deeps this task might call upon, so intimately close to the heart of the people whose every throbbing energy it must tax, that it would stand as a memorial name. "And Moses said, Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" That question "*Who am I?*" is not fundamental. God does not answer it to any hesitant soul. It is not so important to know "*Who am I?*" as to know "*Who art thou, O God?*" The resources and inspirations of every great task are not in Moses, but in the power which he calls supreme. No man sees himself, or knows himself, except as he knows the life that is his life, the spirit that inspirits him. It was not strange that Moses should find his own personality only in finding the surer lines of the personality of God. Moses then and there asked for the new name. And God answered: "I AM THAT I AM." In order to strengthen the idea which doubtless leaped into being, that he might *use* this new name, and that it had an inherent authority, God added: "*Tell Israel: I AM hath sent me unto you.*"

Already God's name, as Israel knew it, had served as a protection against the entrance into their worship of the animals of Egypt and the monsters of the river. In his exile in Midian, Moses had found, still more grand and awe-inspiring than ever before, the Almighty One. There was enough in that name by which his fathers had worshiped God, and enough in their deeper experiences in obeying and serving him, to suggest, even in the time mentioned in the Book of Genesis, the name *Jehovah*. But, at this hour, Moses was really to reveal its meaning, as past ran through present into future events, and to hear God utter to the growing life of Israel the truth of any prophetic idea of him. It was to the life of Israel a *new name*. From henceforth, they were "the people," not only of the Almighty, certainly not of Baal or Moloch : they were "the people of Jehovah." A long step had been taken toward that far-off hour when the greater Jew, whose life was a burning bush, would teach his followers to say : "Our Father who art in heaven."

Moses might now build loftily, because he had gone to the foundation of all being. His first stone of the edifice rested on the self-dependent. His appeal was to the cause of causes. Out of that name would arise commandments and codes, government and prophetic visions, as the blossoms from a seed. Pharaoh was right when he said : "*Who is Jehovah? I know not Jehovah.*" To name the power of powers *Jehovah*, was the declaration that the soul of all history and all hope *is*. All true philosophy of history begins in that moment of which God gives the account in the words : "And God spake unto Moses and said, I am Jehovah ; and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of *El Shaddai* [The Omnipotent], but by the name *Jehovah* did I not make myself known unto them."

"I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Here, then, is the covenanting God — the supreme God of promises. One fact connects and relates the ages. "I AM THAT I AM" is himself both the promise and the promiser, to every Moses of civilization. This personal and care-taking God puts a soul into all the apparent chaos of ideas and things. These burning bushes are the beacon fires of the race's pilgrimage. Alone they last, while generations come and go. Man is never out of sight of their ardent glow. His children come to hear the same voice from the center of

the flame, which has scarcely died away on the ears of their fathers. The ages of human life are thus, under Jehovah, one and indivisible.

With this resource, with this light illuminating the past, the present and the future, Israel could now speak, through Moses, to saint or to tyrant. The dead Joseph lived again in the words with which Moses addressed the elders of Israel. The dying words of the patriarch were: "God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."¹ Now, nearly four hundred years later, they trembled again on the unquiet air, when Moses spake: "The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying: I have surely visited you."² Joseph had made an oath: "Ye shall carry up my bones from hence."³ In the ampler eloquence of Moses, the glad and heroic funeral procession was already forming. In this steady and sagacious leader, what a different man lives than was the self-confident, lawless and rash avenger of that beaten slave! Moses' ardor, however, while it had cooled, had permanently contributed to the intensity of his purpose to do something for his own people. In that exile of forty years, consequent upon his rash act, the slaves had been growing readier for noble revolt, and when their unknown leader returned, the very dependence he placed in the elders of Israel showed that he appreciated the value of organization in his enterprise. All the old fire was there, but now it played upon the resources, developing every cold drop into propulsive steam.

But, through the eyes of the leader, Israel must behold God's will in the most suggestive signs. Surely the method of God's training at such hours helps us to understand the prophet, ages afterward, when he says: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt."⁴ Moses was commanded to cast his shepherd's staff on the ground. It was transformed into a slithering serpent, and Moses was terrified and fled. God bids him take it by the tail, and lo, it is "a rod in his hand." So the Lord was leading Israel; so also *does* the Lord lead his Israel evermore. It was more than the announcement to Moses that, as he had hitherto used the ordinary crook of the shepherd, so he was henceforth to use for sovereign purposes the power of Egypt. Even Pharaoh's diadem shone with the serpent — the symbol of royalty, the emblem of Egyptian power. It is true that when, once again, he seized it, his thought would apprehend Israel as his flock and this "rod of God" should be his staff of authority and affection. But more than this is to be learned here. The secret of all masterful manhood is here an open one. Every man is a victim of his power, or the victor over it — the victor *by* it and *through* it. The ambition of a life, if it be thrown on the ground, is a hissing serpent from which any frightened and timid soul flees; that ambition seized by the strong hand of faith becomes the rod of strength. Whatever authority over his fellows the man who possesses it is to have in this world must come from this very factor in his existence. A weakness is only a power cast down on the earth; a power is only a weakness seized and handled by the courage of faith. Jehovah continued this teaching of his children of Israel by Moses. He placed his hand in his bosom, and it became leprous; when he placed it there again it was restored to health and strength. The priestly power in his devotion to Israel brings out the leprous relationship in which they stand to Egypt, and that same power delivers them from this contagion. Again, the water of the Nile shall become blood as he pours it on the dry land. Here, God seems to say, is a cause to which all the fruitful energies of the Nile are to be submissive. Surely, as Lange suggests, here are seen the prophetic, the priestly, and the kingly qualities of the deliverer. God gave these to him and developed these in him; and, in their growth, Moses was less self-confident; he was modest in the presence of new energies.

What could be more natural to such a concentrated soul, in the midst of so much din and confusion, than a desire to possess the orator's guerdon of strength? He bemoaned the slowness of his tongue. Here was the Cromwell of the period, with what Sir Philip Warwick called a

¹ Genesis 1, 24.² Exodus iii, 16.³ Genesis 1, 25.⁴ Hosea xi, 1.

"sharp and untuneable voice" and "no grace of speech." Like the stern Oliver, Moses was to change empires by saying "*Yea*" and "*Nay*," at the right times and with just emphasis, though he should also leave to the literature of eloquence some of its finest passages. No greater orator lives than he whose words, like his deeds, are God's utterances through him.

It must be confessed that Pharaoh heard a trumpet-tone within the words which soon left the lips of Moses and fell upon the ruler's ears: "The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God."¹ "The God of the Hebrews!" This expression echoed the arms of ancient battles and whispered of other and future fields of contest. We must remember that Moses was not always beyond reproach; God was delivering men by a man like unto themselves. But, at least, here was no shrewd diplomat seeking only the escape of Israel by way of false pretenses; the earnest-eyed Hebrew leader had not forgotten Israel's ancient rights; and, indeed, in this matter, he was regardful of the rights and religious sensitiveness of Egypt. It must be remembered that Israel had never been captured, or rightfully bound, even according to Egyptian jurisprudence. Under Joseph, it was understood that they "sojourned there." Besides, in this case, their worship, in which they were granted such privileges, must be an abominable thing to Egyptian piety. This request on the part of Moses and Israel gave the government of Pharaoh an opportunity for wise and just concession. "All government," says Burke, "is possible only by compromise." A righteous compromise is truest statesmanship. Would he, *could* he, exercise the statesmanship which looked toward an assimilation of this people with the Egyptian nationality? To neglect to do this involved, here and now, such an act of despotism as could indicate nothing else to Israel than a determination to abolish the worship of Jehovah and stamp out the Hebrew. Pharaoh refused. So, and only so, does God "harden Pharaoh's heart."

CHAPTER V.

LAST DAYS IN EGYPT.

THE war of the great exile was on. It was, as Pharaoh dimly saw, a war with Jehovah also. He had felt the force of the Hebrew's vision of God. "Jehovah," said Moses, "God of Israel, saith: Let my people go that they may hold a feast in the wilderness." "Who is Jehovah?" protested the startled devotee of the golden bull — "Who is Jehovah that I should obey his voice?"² The King of Egypt had already lost his slaves. Statesmanship without the "*I am that I am*" has no future. It can only say to the strained institution, as Pharaoh said to that mass of bondmen, "Get you to your burdens." All revolution is repressed evolution. "Statesmanship," says Goldwin Smith, "is not the art of making a revolution, but the art of avoiding one." Moses seemed to be the revolutionist; he was only pleading for evolution. Pharaoh was the spring of the great revolt; and God said of him: "With a strong hand shall *he* drive them out of his land. I am Jehovah!"³ Pilgrims with Mayflower compacts in their cabins owe to Pharaoh their glorious exile. "I am Jehovah!" They alone bear republics and democracies into unsubdued wildernesses or lands of Canaan. "I am Jehovah!"

Too much honor is not likely to be paid to the less conspicuous and unrecorded forces in any beneficent revolution; and we are always likely to underestimate even so strong a spirit as Aaron, the elder brother of this divinely led man. While Moses had been in Midian, Aaron had been so sympathetic with God's purpose and so earnest in pushing it to achievement, that,

¹ Exodus v, 3 (Revised Version).

² Exodus v, 2.

³ Exodus vi, 1-2.



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at length, just before Moses returned to Egypt, Aaron journeyed to meet him at Sinai. In that forty years, Israel had grown ripe for revolt. The elders had fostered and guided the growing desire for freedom. As they came to understand God, they understood more truly man and his problem. With the development of a sense of Jehovah's righteousness had come the development of a sense of the wrongs they had been suffering. Heavier burdens had created only clearer convictions; the lash of the oppressor had intensified a passionate devotion to the cause into whose deeper meanings their as yet unacknowledged leader had been looking. The hour for a shrinking leader had passed. Aaron had already been mentioned to the timid and awed Moses as a person more apt at public speech, and he was ready to go with Moses to Pharaoh — each of the brothers possessed of a new eloquence. Jethro had said to Moses, as he left Midian: "Go in peace!" but now there was no peace before his footsteps. God had told him that his *personal* enemies were dead; the foe of freedom was never more powerful; and Pharaoh would not let the people go. Before the man Moses was worthy to utter a command to Pharaoh, Jehovah had been compelled to strip Moses of all unworthiness; personalities must be lost in causes. It was a terrible culture; great souls may be wedded to great aims, not otherwise. A violent death, the impending of a fearful disease — God's threatened judgments — made him perceive the value of divine command above his own hesitant individualism and the disobedient whim of Zipporah, his wife. Herself compelled to perform the rite of circumcision upon the younger son, according to the covenant with Abraham, she had only this to say to Moses, "Surely a bloody husband art thou to me."¹ Only on the boy's quick recovery did she utter words of delayed gratefulness. The mighty words of God to Moses had been exchanged for Aaron's report of the condition of the Hebrews, as the brothers had conversed together. Pharaoh had offered them only his defiance. Back to their labors the children of Jehovah's covenant had been sent, no longer to be furnished with the usual chopped straw with which they had been manufacturing clay into bricks, no longer able to search for straw and keep up their tale of bricks, *therefore* no longer able to escape the beatings of the overseers — alas, no longer proof against the taunts of the ruler alleging their idleness. Though so recently the elders of Hebrewdom had expressed joy that the crisis had come, now, to train them more thoroughly, Moses and Aaron were charged by the united voice of Israel with being the authors of Israel's woes. Nothing could have given a harder blow. Yet God followed this apparently pitiless stroke against Moses by giving him additional assurances, all of them ringing with the old theme, "*I am Jehovah!*" Command, however, preceded only their failure to reach Pharaoh's heart. Assurance from God swiftly followed defeat with man. At length, Moses and Aaron alone have utterly failed; and now let the Almighty One, whose new name is *Jehovah*, speak to him.

The Pharaoh of this date was, if the conclusions of scholars are right, Menephtah I., son of Rameses II., with whom Moses had doubtless been associated in his childhood within the royal palace. Why should *he* listen, even to this interesting and learned Jew? But his attention was now to be engaged by the power behind the Hebrew:

"*Right* forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,—
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own."

There rang through the mazes of the problem a divine word: "Against the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment; I am Jehovah!"² Moses and his eloquent brother Aaron again confronted the despot. The leader's mission was attested by wondrous signs. The rod became a serpent; but Pharaoh was unmoved, for he knew the Egyptian magicians might surpass this marvel. Great was the meaning of the serpent to idolatrous Egypt, but Aaron's rod swallowed

¹ Exodus iv, 25.

² Exodus xii, 12.



THE TRIUMPH OF AARON'S ROD.

up all the others. That rod symbolized the fact that God's purpose is all-inclusive. But such a lesson is too difficult for an unteachable ruler to learn. The worshiping Pharaoh, probably more than ever attentive to the Nile-god Osiris, is met at the river bank by Moses, just as always human plans that are wrong are met and judged by some lonely but omnipotent truth. Man is more deeply superstitious toward the old gods, when the command of unacknowledged truth is offensive to him. But the Nile is turned into blood. History has many such events, of which this is the symbol. The pride and wealth of evil—all its productiveness and profits—are suddenly made a loathing and hateful asset, when the hour comes for goodness to execute its plans for humanity and God. Many a people, refusing the true ideal, as did Pharaoh, have been unable to drink inspiration from an old one, which, perhaps, had become as much an idol to reactionary wrong as had the Nile to Pharaoh. It is not to the purpose to explain this phenomenon by reference to the transforming influences of the vanishing year upon the river, or to those still more evident influences of the setting sun upon the languid stream. All these Pharaoh understood. Even to explain the event by reference to the "rapid growth of infusoria and minute cryptogamous plants of a red color," making the water red, is to miss the spiritual and perennial fact that, whether these accounts are valid or not, even the best idol—be it a constitution or a man—when it has been made to represent crowned unrighteousness, will inevitably be made a curse by the first appearance of uncrowned righteousness.

As much may be said of the spiritual truths conveyed to any but the disobedient mind of Egypt, in the other plagues visited upon the land and people of Pharaoh. The frog had a high place in the animalistic worship of the realm. Probably the mud consequent on the annual inundation of the Nile had produced vast multitudes of these. Magicians could here imitate Moses to a slight extent. But only Moses—only the supremacy of righteousness—can ever make the life of man worth living and the air he breathes pure. Again, God was *Jehovah*.

Sir Samuel Baker informs us that, after the rice harvest, it often seems that "the very dust is turned into lice." But, in remembering the plague of lice which followed the plague of frogs in Egypt, he must not forget the fact that Aaron's rod had touched the dusty earth. "Beware," says Emerson, "when God lets loose a thinker on the planet: then all things are at a risk." Aaron's rod was full of the divine vitality of truth, even to the point of budding. One living idea, touching a world of things out of harmony with its command, turns them all into curses. The very dust becomes lice. No magician can imitate this miracle, as those of Egypt could not. It is of God's true magic; only the genius of progressive righteousness may perform it; and it is performed all the while, whenever an unbeyed truth comes into contact with recalcitrant untruth. Old saws of obsolescent wisdom roused into a kind of life by a fresh, inherently supreme purpose in history, are the lice whose presence "hardens Pharaoh's heart." Even the magicians of the dull-eyed time sometimes say, as did those of Pharaoh's court, "It is the finger of *Elohim*." This is only part of the truth. It is more sympathetic with the whole truth to say, "It is the finger of *Jehovah*." But Pharaoh had not been led far enough to utter the new and memorial name: "*Jehovah*." The very name involved a statesmanship which meant ruin to his empire.

Another utterance of God—and other small, pestiferous, winged creatures swarmed in the air. This was a heavy stroke against the popular worship. This plague infests the land to this day; but it can never have such significance. These insects were the nation's very symbols of "the creative principle, its emblems of the sun." The profanity was that they had become noxious vermin. Every reformer, perforce, by his introducing contrasting justice into unjust life or society, is a Moses whose power no Pharaoh suspects. Still the tyrant cries, "It is *Elohim*." "Yea," Moses would have added, "and *Jehovah*!" "Let the Hebrews go," said Pharaoh, at last; but on the cessation of the plague, he "hardened his heart"¹ again.

¹ Exodus viii, 28-32.





Following upon these, was the murrain, with its extensive desolation of death amongst the cattle. This stroke against the religiousness of Pharaoh's nation was severe. The cow and ox in Egypt were sacred; and, therefore, Isis and Osiris were offended gods. By this immense event, Apis and Mnevis had been insulted and profaned. Deities of evil are always dethroned by goodness; and the iconoclast is thought a nuisance, insolent and rebellious. And now man is touched. First, the *things* he worships, or prizes, are smitten by any progressive truth to which man is disobedient — first, his profits, or his ancient and outworn institutions; then the man himself is stricken. It is the method of progress. Even the magicians yielded before the ulcers and tumors of the people. Political and ecclesiastical magic goes down before realities. Liberty and truth cannot hide unpleasant facts. When Moses and Aaron threw into the air the ashes from the huge furnaces, which were the emblems of their slavery, the spirit of freedom used the magic of their visible chains, as later, in writing "Uncle Tom's Cabin," that spirit was able to bring a nation to its better ideal. Still *Jehovah* was unacknowledged by the throne of Egypt. Any victory without that acknowledgment, Moses knew, was a spiritual defeat. All real progress is by the advance of ideas. The harvest-growing fields of Egypt were swept with storm.

"For what avails the plough or sail,
Or land, or life, if freedom fail?"

Man is not made for grain — grain exists for man; and at such crises, man untrue to his destiny is worthless. Let the grain fail! "*I am Jehovah.*"¹

Again the humbled Pharaoh listened awhile to the warning voices. Moses was instant upon the essential thing: "Ye will not yet fear *Jehovah-Elohim.*"² It is significant that the reformer tries to help Pharaoh from one step to the next, using what he *has* acknowledged in connection with what he *ought* to acknowledge — "*Jehovah-Elohim*," he says. It was more evident than ever that Moses could not afford, and was not seeking, a personal triumph. God had said to Pharaoh through him: "How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?"³ Moses had seen God in the bush; he was getting into the habit of realizing that the meaning in things is *God*. The Apostle's account of him strikes the secret and opens it. It was summed up in this: "*He endured, as seeing him who is invisible.*"⁴ It must be God's victory over Pharaoh, or it is worthless to Moses and Israel.

Even Pharaoh's servants now labor with the stubborn ruler. Compromises are offered by the throne; but to have accepted them, on the part of Moses, would have been for him to have lost what, Burke says, the statesman always must guard in any compromise — "the immediate jewel of the soul." The men of Israel would not go without their families and flocks. No irony of the king moved them, as he prated of their seeking to do evil. "*Jehovah will be with you!*"⁵ was his sneer. The visitation of locusts came. The earth was beclouded and the fields were a desolation. Formerly Israel had asked only to go away to her feast — an event which was attended with such sacrifice of rams and oxen as would have offended the devotees of Apis, Osiris and Isis; but now, they say boldly that their cattle must go with them; and it is a journey from which a return is not mentioned any more. Still Pharaoh resisted. Moses and Aaron were ordered from his sight.

Once more *Jehovah* made the attack, and this time, upon the loftiest bulwark of rebellious antagonism. Supreme above all gods, in the thought of Egypt, was the sun. According to their religious ideas and devotion, Pharaoh was the Incarnate Sun-god. Heliopolis was to this deity what Athens was to Athenè of Greece. There flashed the waters of the sacred spring of healing; there, in contrast with the lonely obelisk of to-day, shadowing the tamarind and fig tree, rose the gorgeous edifice near the sacred lake and grove, its approach gleaming with yellow marble; its main gateway ornamented with a vast and brilliant disk of the sun. And now the

¹ Exodus vi, 2.

² Exodus ix, 30.

³ Exodus x, 3.

⁴ Hebrews xi, 27.

⁵ Exodus x, 10.

god supreme within all the Egyptian pantheon was hidden. The whole of Egypt except Goshen was covered with darkness. Surely there is much to learn here. The very earth, life itself, is meaningless, in all history—man sees nothing and can do nothing truly, when right is unobeyed, pleading for liberty. One radiant beam of unconfessed truth has often put the idolized sun of a generation into eclipse. Then Pharaoh again summoned Moses to his throne. The earlier Lorenzo de Medici calls for his Savonarola. Stern, as was the Florentine idealist when he cried: “Restore the liberties of Florence!” Moses refused his offered compromise. As the calm and stalwart Jew left the angered Egyptian alone, he said: “I will see thy face again no more.”¹

Now that the false strength of the idolatry of Egypt had been made apparent and the faith of the Jewish population had received the needed education which these events imparted, there was but one thing likely and needful to come into the life of the Hebrews from whose dwellings in Goshen the sunlight had not vanished. That one object lesson God would now give them; it would unify them, and at the same time it would distract their foes. The event was at hand that would make even Pharaoh rejoice in Israel’s departure at any cost and in any way. When, in obedience to God’s command, the Hebrews had asked presents from the Egyptians, “jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment,”² they were given many things which were sure to be of value to them. But Egypt could make no such priceless contribution as came to their spiritual life and hope in the institution of the Passover feast. A new calendar was created by this fact, each year thereafter beginning with the commemoration of their birthday as a nation. Out of great travail was Israel to come forth from Egypt. To Israel, it was an hour of joy. On the tenth day of the “*month of ears*,” *Abib*,³ each family must choose its sacrifice—an unblemished male kid or lamb. Each sacrifice should be no more than a meal for a household, or, if a household were too small, then it should not be too large for the household and others properly invited to consume it. “Between the evenings”—that is, between sunset and moonrise, or starlight—the kids or lambs chosen were to be killed by the congregation. Each family was to sprinkle some of the blood “on the side posts and the upper doorposts of the houses.”⁴ For this, a branch of the cleansing hyssop was to be used. Then the feast was to be consumed. Sandaled and girdled, prepared also for instant departure with staff in hand, they were to eat hastily and refuse to leave the house that night. All the flesh not eaten was to be consumed with fire. That night the Lord was to pass through the land of Egypt. In his visitation, every firstborn child and the firstborn offspring of the beasts would be smitten, save those in the houses whose lintels bore the blood mark. That feast should signify Israel’s redemption from Egypt’s death, by the blood of innocence. It was to foreshadow the coming sacrifice, the Christ of God who is our passover. Every householder was as yet the only priest of his family. They were also to observe at this hour the feast of unleavened bread. Later on, through the unleavened bread, they were to look back to an hour when, in haste, “they took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.”⁵

The night came. Jehovah moved through Egypt, and the midnight air echoed with the cry of death. At last, Jehovah was triumphant over the gods of Egypt. In this desperate hour, Moses and Aaron were sought by the king. The people of his realm had at length beseeched him, “Let them go, else we be all dead men!” “Go,” cried out Pharaoh, “go and serve *Jehovah*. Take your flocks and herds, as ye have said, and begone.”⁶ At last he had acknowledged Jehovah. Then, as if his heart felt the foregleam of that bright noon, streaming from Canaan through the long years, over wandering and exile, and falling over the grave of his own firstborn who had perished that night, he added: “*And bless me also!*”⁷ No

¹ Exodus x, 29.² Exodus xii, 35.³ Exodus xii, 3.⁴ Exodus xii, 22, 23.⁵ Exodus xii, 34.⁶ Exodus xii, 32.⁷ Exodus xii, 32.



THE EXODUS FROM EGYPT.

one can look upon the monument, now in the museum at Berlin, which is said to commemorate this child of the bereaved Egyptian monarch, without hearing in his heart the echo of that pathetic appeal, "*And bless me also!*"

In all comparative study of crowned heads, Pharaoh appears to be most like a seventeenth century Charles I. or an eighteenth century Marie Antoinette. It is as impossible not to sympathize with his sorrow and perplexity when he cries, "*And bless me also!*" as it is to withhold a generous fellow-feeling when the finely bred English king is brought to the block, or the pride of the French palaces is carted to execution. It is also impossible, amidst even such scenes as those, to forget that the Egyptian monarch commanded weary Israel to make bricks without straw; the cavalier king annulled parliamentary government, and the haughty queen set her dainty foot upon popular right.

Egypt had lost her slaves; in the echo of that wail, they slipped from her grasp. It had been impossible for Menephtah to succeed in holding a progressive people, leagued as were the Hebrews with the progressive Jehovah. Had the ruler granted their demands, his throne would have been a toy; but perhaps such thrones are most valuable only as toys. To neglect to do this was to offend the Almighty One. Now the great exodus had begun. More than two millions of Egypt's productive human chattels had gone; but, far more wonderful than that fact alone, this multitude of slaves had been so educated by poverty and visions, so trained by sorrow and hope, that on that paschal night, as a mass penetrated, but not yet pervaded, with a conception of the supreme idea of liberty under law, they had stepped from bondage to freedom; and, rallying round the bones of Joseph, they leaped into the form of the noblest nationality of ancient times. It was the noblest, because the ideal for which it stood was fullest of creative and transforming hope.

CHAPTER VI.

FOLLOWING THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE.

SUCH a stupendous movement attracted to its multitude a crowd, made up not alone of Hebrews who joined them at point after point on their line of march, but also of peoples variously nurtured and moved by different motives. There were slaves, outcasts, and exiles, wandering shepherds, and, doubtless, here and there, came and followed a lover of liberty. Succoth furnished the great army with a halting place for the first night. Here, where the leafy booths offered them a new sort of hospitality, the world of the Orient beheld the first peaceful assemblage of so many devotees of the nobility of labor, the pricelessness of human beings; and here slept the largest army the world has ever seen, which has accomplished such a step toward freedom, with hands unstained by blood. As in the next few hours they baked their unleavened bread, and the leader made his plans and purposes more complete and apparent to the elders, they were the first representatives of the idea which has created for later days the ten dooms of every Alfred, the great remonstrance of Pym and Hampden, the declaration of independence of every Jefferson and Hancock, the emancipation proclamation of every Lincoln. Dean Stanley fitly reminds us how deeply Succoth, this "place of booths, or tabernacles," must have impressed them, inasmuch as, later on, they used this very name to designate the gladsome Feast of Tabernacles. Indeed, it ought to be said here that no man more than Moses, no nation more than Hebrewdom, incarnates more truly the truth spoken by the English novelist and poet: "Our finest hope is finest memory," while, at the same time,

being a witness to the truth which Emerson utters: "The contest between the Future and the Past is one between Divinity entering and Divinity departing." In his death hour, Moses begs for the "good will of him who dwelt in the bush." In the chapter of the Book of Exodus describing the events immediately succeeding the departure of Israel from Egypt, we are told that Jehovah spake of the eating of the unleavened bread, saying, "Thou shalt tell thy son: This is done because of that which Jehovah did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt."¹ In the light of such memories as these — each a matrix of personal or national hope — Israel was able to reëcho that startling and early proclamation of the equal rights of men: "One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you."² Noble memory is always prophecy. But the comprehensive understanding of all that Israel had been led to undertake and all that Jehovah and his prophets had uttered was not, by any means, as yet a national possession. Therefore, the "wanderings" began, as they were to continue. Not to Canaan, by a route through Gaza, short and direct, would Jehovah lead them. They must be educated in the desert. As only by long and wearisome spiritual routes, which, indeed, often revert and cross each other, a man or a nation may reach a great truth and be able to see it, and willing devotedly to defend it, so the courage and intelligence, the faith and idealism equal to the future task of Hebrewdom in universal history had to be inspired, trained, and refined in their forty years of journeying in the wilderness.

There is no straight road for any God-inspired soul to any Canaan. Forward, then, to Etham. By taking this route, Israel was escaping the fierce Philistines, and nothing could have been more unfortunate than for the exiles to have been compelled to fight this strong people at such a moment in their march. At Etham, in the edge of the wilderness, where the sand areas stretch away from the old green fields, rose before them the symbol of the guiding Jehovah. "And Jehovah went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night."³

Just as Moses found his source of ideals and aims in the burning bush of Horeb, so Israel found a perpetual commandment and culture for the long wilderness journey in this pillar of cloud and fire. It was more to Israel than was to Greece the great Alexander's brazier, whose combustibles, lit for illumination, flamed from the top of a lofty pole, elevated at the spot where the mighty captain had his pavilion whence he directed his army. It may have been connected with some older ideas which made fire a sacred symbol; it doubtless was related to the symbolism of the burning bush. It was, as we shall see, the second in the series of God's educative emblems. By being at once a flame at night and a cloud by day, it told of truth, righteousness, love, beauty, which lead and protect, each of which furnishes an ensign by which the devoted soul may march on from duty to duty at all times.

In this and in all uses of its meanings, we must see that, as the value of every lawgiver, like Moses, lies in his ability to get man on to the Christ, in whom we find the "law of liberty,"⁴ so every symbol which has progress in it for those who follow it must contain an anticipation of that complete symbol of God, his Christ. This is God's child-garden system of education. "The law was our tutor, leading us to Christ." In that tutoring, as in the use of all symbols of truths or realities in any true system of culture, each early emblem leads into, and so foretells each that succeeds, until the consummate symbol is reached. So the burning bush is, so far as it is a symbol worthy of being obeyed at all, significant of a still more rich symbolism which at length presents the truth of God in its highest form. The highest form of truth is not a burning bush, or a pillar of cloud and flame, not even Sinai's law or a holy institution; but the highest form of truth is personal humanity. Everything in God's system of education tends toward the incarnation of God in man. At last, as the Revelation says, even "the Tabernacle of God is with men"⁵ and the revelator, beholding a picture of complete

¹ Exodus xiii, 8.² Exodus xii, 49.³ Exodus xiii, 21.⁴ James i, 25, or ii, 12.⁵ Revelation xxi, 3.

civilization, writes: "I saw no temple therein."¹ Incarnation is the highest form of reality under God. The Incarnate may say: "I and the Father are one."² Jesus Christ is, therefore, the reality to which, for example, the burning bush leads by its symbolism. *He* is the one personality ever burning with love, faith, truth, holiness, yet not consumed. As much is true of the pillar of cloud and flame. It is more than a relief of fire worship, if, indeed, that enters into it at all. It is a waymark to divine humanity, earlier than the Shechinah, leading up to and into the Shechinah, which, in due course, because it is higher, is still more close to the highest symbol in this divine culture. That pillar of cloud and fire afterward rested upon the Most Holy Place, and the prophet Isaiah saw it, as in perfect accord with this developing scheme, "upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion."³ Therefore, St. Augustine touched the core of Christianity as a consummate stage in God's culture of humanity, after this method, when he said: "The true Shechinah is man." Thus, there is no more penetrative or sympathetic statement of the connection between local Israel and universal humanity, in this history, than the Apostle's words, when he says: "All these things happened to them by way of figure."⁴ Before that sacred wonder, they mused of Canaan by day, and beneath its splendor they dreamed of its milk and honey by night. Because they thus dreamed and often forgot the vision of something higher than milk and honey, they needed this kindergarten-like emblem as they had needed many other symbols of God's education before. Israel was yet "a child."⁵

All had gone well thus far, for water and food were in abundance, and the loneliness and peril of their situation, as in this state of contesting ignorance and intelligence they marched farther from the old scenes, and the surety of "three meals a day and a place to sleep in," had not yet fallen like a shadow upon them to oppress their hearts. Nothing in this world costs so much as liberty, save righteousness, and without righteousness there is no liberty. All this Israel had to learn in forty years—a lesson which thousands of years of efforts at civilization have as yet failed to teach the human race thoroughly. Man reverts. Safety as to food and drink and a bed to sleep in, the first of the good things of life, is an old goal to which all idealists are wont to look back longingly, in the first lonely confronting of those problems which come with every effort for true freedom. Dull compliance with any situation which guarantees these bodily comforts seems half a heroism, especially when the past, which has always furnished them, is turned into a foe. All efforts at liberty mean the enthronement of the soul above the body; and slavery had emphasized the value of the body in the life of these Hebrews; and under the fortress walls of Etham the soul's concern—freedom—appeared less sublime than when the body was stung with a slave-whip. The soul of Israel trembled on her new throne. The command came: "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn back."⁶ Backward to "encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-Zephon!"⁷ Moses knew Israel's weakness and strength at a point like this. Enemies were everywhere, the fortress soldiery of Etham, the rulers of the South who were as yet unexcited; Pharaoh was sure to repent of his act of permission, and Moses could already hear the war-chariots of Egypt in the rear. The somewhat extemporaneous courage of Israel was not to be depended upon. The huge caravans were as yet orderless and undisciplined; and now they were murmuring, while their petty misunderstandings and little selfishnesses were leading them at length to complaining criticism and base clamor against Moses; the gleaming chariots of Pharaoh were rolling toward them in hot pursuit. The value of liberty was vanishing. They had felt the oppression of the fact that something had compelled them to turn back. Progress comes often by apparent retreat. Then the wilderness seems a huge and fearful place of death.

For fifty miles they had journeyed to the "place where the reeds grow," and from that camp, near to the present Suez, they sent up their wail. The Egyptian army, thinking that

¹ Revelation xxi, 22.² John x, 30 (Revised Version).³ Isaiah iv, 5.⁴ I. Corinthians x, 11.⁵ Hosea xi, 1.⁶ Exodus xiv, 2.⁷ Exodus xiv, 2.

Moses had become "entangled in the land," and that "the wilderness" had "shut them in,"¹ enraged that the evident intention of Israel was to escape from bondage, and probably relying on news from the garrison, sent its cavalry to bring back or destroy the exiles. It was a great opportunity for a force which was at that hour at its finest condition. The chivalry of Egypt, driving highly bred horses and riding in chariots which roll yet in the incised temple-tale at Karnak, had now their moment of glory. Probably the long days of mourning over the deaths of Egypt's firstborn had added to the fierceness of their attack, after having delayed it for seventy days. Ebbtide, the hour for the receding flood in the Red Sea, which was now immediately in front of Israel, came as slowly as their caravans approached. There was no other path for them, save the way through the waters. Mountains frowned from west and south; the rush of dust-covered royal cavalry mingled with the lispings of the waves on the beach. "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying: Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it has been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness."² This was all that Israel had to give to the sorely perplexed and burdened commander. Never did a feeble faithlessness in the worth of freedom, or a cheap cynicism in the presence of Jehovah's invisible resources, more offensively bedeck itself in its own rags.

"Though love repine and reason chafe,
There came a voice without reply,
'Tis man's perdition to be safe
When for the truth he ought to die."

This voice, as yet, they were not able to hear.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RED SEA.

WONDERFUL as is the weakness of humanity, it is never quite so wonderful as the strength of God. As human history reveals mankind, it does not appear marvelous that "they were sore afraid,"³ and that Egypt, which had taught them by its cities of the dead an almost fantastic belief as to the value of sepulture, should come before them as a fitter place to die in than was this desert. The hour had now come when that rod, once a serpent—the emblem of power seized for noble purposes—must be lifted up in dauntless faith. Night came, as night full of doubt and full of vision always comes when any soul or nation, led by divine influences, comes up to a circumstance apparently fatal to its progress. That night gave to the host of Israel a deeper meaning for the pillar of cloud and fire. Such times of trial to human faith in the supreme value of righteousness and freedom always disclose a fact which comes, as did the fiery cloud, between the hosts of Israel and the hosts of Egypt. That fact is Jesus Christ. This hour with Israel held a foregleam of him; and it gives an intimation of his place in the philosophy of history. His personality, his life, his ideal—these are pillars of cloud and fire in the process of history. History is largely the record of a perpetual flight of Israel out of Egypt, toward freedom. Always to Egyptlike conservatism and despotism this personal fact, Christ Jesus, is a cloud that bewilders and darkens—for unadvancing antiquity and selfishness never understands him; while, to Israel's faith in progress, even though it falters, this same fact, inextinguishable and serene, is a perpetual and kindly illumination. "It

¹ Exodus xiv, 3.

² Exodus xiv, 11, 12.

³ Exodus xiv 10.

was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these, so that the one came not near the other all the night.”¹

Israel had followed the emblem to the sea's edge. “Wherefore criest thou unto me?” said the resourceful God, who would be trusted only by action; “speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.”² Over the sea the rod was lifted up, by the calm faith of Moses. Over the path left beneath its shadow, as the waves rolled back on either hand, the solemn and wondering Hebrews marched dry-shod. Their advance, however, was not enough. It is never enough that good may conquer: evil must be extirpated. The pursuing Egyptians followed into the midst of the sea. The later song of the Psalmist indicates that a terrific thunderstorm burst upon them. This is the account in the book of Exodus: “And it came to pass, that in the morning watch Jehovah looked unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: so that the Egyptians said, Let us flee from the face of Israel; for Jehovah fighteth for them against the Egyptians. And Jehovah said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and Jehovah overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. And the waters returned and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them.”³

St. Paul, who seems to be attracted constantly to state and restate the problem and triumph of Israel, puts it all into these eloquent words: “They were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”⁴

So much for Israel, and so much for Egypt. A national tragedy, almost fatal to the throne of Egypt, had at length succeeded the long and agonizing years of Israel's bondage. Retribution came, and every anguish had its compensation in the scales of Jehovah. Looked at from the point of view already taken, it does not at all detract from the present and permanent meaning to mankind of such a disaster to Egypt, which was also a victory for Jehovah and a deliverance to Israel, if any of the many explanations of the occurrence of the awful event be adopted, wholly or in part. None of them, however, appear to be entirely satisfactory. Travelers and scholars of the first rank have given the most thorough research and wide learning to this fragment of the world. From Strabo, and Josephus, and Diodorus of Sicily to Napoleon I., Niebuhr, Stanley, and Professor Palmer, every scrap of information concerning the past and present condition and location of these waters and mountains has been drawn into service, to make it less difficult for less believing minds to account for these unmatched incidents. Doubtless, the waters of the Red Sea, at that date, may have occupied a larger area. The ebb and flood tides have been shown to be almost obedient to the strong northeast winds. Islets that look like huge stepping stones, with narrow and deep waters between, are still seen when the wind drives the waters southward. Sandbanks and fords have been found that might have felt the trembling feet of the Hebrew exiles. Traditions tell of hours when, as Diodorus says, “the whole bay at the head of the sea was laid bare.” A Greek historian of Hebrewdom speaks of the opinion of the priests of Memphis that Moses here called into service his accurate knowledge of the tides. This writer alludes also to the opposite opinion of the priests of Hieropolis, which leaves the event a miracle in which fire balls blinded the Egyptians when they essayed to follow the Hebrews. Geikie, who admirably gathers these and other opinions and facts, does well to quote the wise remark of Niebuhr: “It would be a great mistake to imagine that the passage of such a great caravan could have been effected by purely natural means.” It is well to reflect that even if the event were in due course of nature, as we

¹ Exodus xiv, 20.² Exodus xiv, 15.³ Exodus xiv, 24-28.⁴ I. Corinthians x, 2.



JOHN MARTIN.

THE DESTRUCTION OF PHARAOH'S HOST.

understand nature, God's will and action are not ruled out, and the fact is fully as significant as before. Not the extraordinary, but the ordinary processes of nature and life are those which God has chosen most often to be his ministers and his revelation.

From that hour, the throne of the Pharaohs was falling to pieces. The permanent fact which all this history contributes is that the righteous progress of man under God has met and will ever meet indubitable difficulty, Red Seas of peril that appear fatal; and in these, somehow and sometime, Jehovah executes judgment, saves the hosts of right, and brings disaster to the hosts of wrong.

Out of this peril came forth the richest national anthem in the annals of time. "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel."¹

It is a saying as old as Fletcher of Salton: "Let me make the songs of a nation, and I care not who makes their laws." William Pitt confessed the unique value of Dibdin's sea songs in the hour when England needed something besides his genius for finance and the Iron Duke's sword. It is well-nigh impossible, in this connection and in view of the echoes of music which come to us from its use on fields of battle and in the more difficult crises of peace at later times in Hebrew history, to overstate the value of that unequalled ode of triumph which, at this glad hour, burst forth from the heart of Israel. Grand moments grandly apprehended and used by grand souls — these alone may produce grand poems. As the Divine Comedy of Dante and the "Paradise Lost" of John Milton were the utterances of a later Puritanism, so was this magnificent song of Moses the outpouring of that earlier Puritanism which made all recent victories of the same spirit possible. It is not only the oldest triumphal ode in any literature; it is the richest deposit of gems shining upon the diadem of any young nation. It not only sounds the deeps and heights of the genius of Hebrewdom; it has furnished to her succeeding ages the noblest currents of prophecy. Psalms and battle cries, mystic foretellings and solemn anthems, have grown resonant with melody, by catching for a theme some single strain, or echoing to other times some separate chord of its harmony. It possesses the historic spirit and the poetic manner of the "Iliad" of Homer, who was as yet unborn, and the urgent faith and particular yearning of the "Ein' Feste Burg ist Unser Gott" of Martin Luther — the Moses of German song and piety. It is closer to the soul of Israel than the Marseillaise is to that of France, and its measures are as much more rich in creative power as was that revolution above the revolution of 1789. "Rule Britannia" of England and the "Heil Dir Im Siegeskranz" of Germany were not born out of any such matrix of divine energy, and they seem as patriotic lays in comparison with this trumpet-toned hymn of God's delivered ones. America has met two revolutions and crossed two Red Seas, without producing a soul equal to the task of so justly singing her joy and hope. The craggy elevation from which the leader of that vast choir uttered the first words is not known; the dancing maidens whose happy lips caught the refrain have been dust for thousands of years; Miriam and her choral multitude, the wave-like mass of chanting Hebrew soldiers, the solemn instruments strung with such intensity of feeling — all these have vanished; but so poetically and potently does this great lyric enshrine the life of the Jew in all time, so strenuous with involved hope for all mankind is this triumphal poem, that to-day it is repeated each Sabbath in Hebrew temples, sung in Christian cathedrals, and yonder in heaven they who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb "sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." Israel had taken another vast stride toward nationality. She was possessed of a national hymn, at once her declaration of independence and her song. With the utterance of its strophes, not only was the antiphony instituted in Hebrew music, but theocratic government found a surer place in universal politics. It is not to the purpose to say that it was a compilation of fragments, or that it is a collection of earlier psalms. The genius of Homer probably made the "Iliad" of the ballads sung on Grecian streets; and Taine says:

¹ Exodus xv, 1.



MIRIAM, OR THE SONG OF TRIUMPH.

"It is the Grecian Bible." It required a fiery soul to fuse these materials into such an imperishable monument of literature; and the "Iliad" is certainly not more Homeric than this ode is Mosaic. Even the negative critical spirit of Bleek allows that "a genuinely Mosaic song lies at the foundation" of the poem. The important fact is that it is the heart-beat of Israel throbbing with all the significance of the hour in which her nationality was conscious of itself.

"I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously:
 The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.
 The Lord is my strength and song,
 And he is become my salvation:
 This is my God, and I will praise him;
 My father's God, and I will exalt him.
 The Lord is a man of war:
 The Lord is his name.
 Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea:
 And his chosen captains are sunk in the Red Sea.
 The deeps cover them:
 They went down into the depths like a stone.
 Thy right hand, O Lord, is glorious in power,
 Thy right hand, O Lord, dasheth in pieces the enemy.
 And in the greatness of thine excellency thou overthrowest them that rise up
 against thee:
 Thou sendest forth thy wrath, it consumeth them as stubble.
 And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were piled up,
 The floods stood upright as an heap;
 The deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea.
 The enemy said,
 I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil:
 My lust shall be satisfied upon them;
 I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.
 Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them:
 They sank as lead in the mighty waters.
 Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?
 Who is like thee, glorious in holiness,
 Fearful in praises, doing wonders?
 Thou stretchest out thy right hand,
 The earth swallowed them.
 Thou in thy mercy hast led the people which thou hast redeemed:
 Thou hast guided them in thy strength to thy holy habitation.
 The peoples have heard, they tremble:
 Pangs have taken hold on the inhabitants of Philistia.
 Then were the dukes of Edom amazed;
 The mighty men of Moab, trembling taketh hold upon them:
 All the inhabitants of Canaan are melted away.
 Terror and dread falleth upon them;
 By the greatness of thine arm they are as still as a stone;
 Till thy people pass over, O Lord,
 Till the people pass over which thou hast purchased.
 Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance,
 The place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in,
 The sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established.
 The Lord shall reign for ever and ever."¹

¹ Exodus xv, 1-18 (Revised Version).

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WILDERNESS OF SHUR.—MARAH AND ELIM.—THE MANNA.

MOSES and Israel were now in the peninsula of Sinai: he and Israel knew Jehovah now better than ever before. Again the Hebrew and Midian—the man and his circumstances—confronted one another. With what different and larger responsibilities did the leader look again upon that apparent confusion of broken mountains, sandy plains, nestling patches of verdure, torrent paths, dwarfed and stunted trees, and the few perennial springs—the very territory in whose valleys he had tended the pasturing flocks of Jethro years before, now the training ground for the Hebrew nation.

Nations are born in the hour of some great agony, at the moment when wrong overreaches itself; they become conscious of their own individual vitality at some Red Sea. At such moments, they feel themselves possessed of their own melody which is to be fully expressed in years of national progress and achievement. This is the hour of song, of poetic vision, of transcendental faith. After this experience is passed, the finest statesmanship has always foreseen Sinai. Liberty is not a gift vouchsafed at once, at the beginning of a life, or at the commencement of a nation's career. It is a fruit—the latest and best of time. It is an end toward which each songful declaration of independence, such as was this triumphal ode, or the American Declaration of Independence, is only an early and long stride. Between the hour of that outburst of song—which is always largely a protest and a faith—and the far-off hour when freedom is safe because freedom is true, there is no spot so sacred, because so necessary, as a Sinai where law establishes its authority. From the hour of the revelation of law, constitutionalism dates its molding and restraining operation on any people. Declarations of independence and songs of national birthtime make the atmosphere which the new commonwealth breathes. Law creates a pathway, makes the mass interdependent, and transforms what is only a mob into a government. Law is the source of precedents; and a crude

“Freedom slowly broadens down from precedent to precedent,”

at last reaching toward a finer freedom in which at length is possible “the parliament of man, the federation of the world.”

Every step was now a step toward Sinai. These days were as important to these wanderers as the days between the Fourth of July, 1776, and the day of the meeting of the convention which wrought out the constitution were to the American republic. The Wilderness of Shur, into which Israel was now led from the camp of Ayun Mûsa, was truly the wilderness of “the wall.” Behind them was Africa; before them were the desert and the future. A gigantic range of peaks, now known as Jebel-er-Rahah, formed the wall which, coming close to the Red Sea, continues in the greater chain of Jebel-et-Tih on the north. Standing with memories of the green fields of Egypt immediately behind them, this mass of rock, desert, and difficulty directly confronted them. Three days had passed, and the weary marchers had exhausted the supplies of water obtained at Ayun Mûsa. Following the pillar of cloud and flame, they had come to wady after wady, each a dry torrent-bed, serviceable only as offering them a way through the masses of stone, silent gravel-wastes and the few green patches which were as thirsty as the pilgrims. Again it was demonstrated that, as yet, they set no high value upon liberty. True freedom faded in minds at that moment not sufficiently cultured to comprehend or appreciate. In their complaining, one hears the footsteps of forty years which must come and go before they get to the true ideas of what liberty really is and what it is worth. God puts Canaan farther away, at every occasion in the life of a nation or a soul, when it is

certain that there is no conviction that liberty is faith in the divine order and that it is worth all it costs. The Ayun Mûsa, which is now a beautiful summer resort, with its nineteen wells, seemed the last spot of the golden age which is ever behind us when we doubt God. Israel was living so as to teach all men. Every rich life, the career of every highly inspired people, in proportion as life is subject to divine enriching, or the nation is visited with divine inspirations, seems to be an oscillation between hours where some Red Sea furnishes too much water and a desert where there is too little. There was a confronting sea; here is severe thirst.

But yonder is a green spot. It is, however, at this moment, bitter. The name is Marah — “bitter.”¹ And it is not remarkable that Israel was disappointed there. The fierce light of the sun beating upon the hills fell, as from a heated wall, upon their suffering caravans. At Marah, which is the Huwarah of our day, even yet the expectant traveler is met with the natives shouting to him, as he seeks refreshing, “Bitter! Bitter!” The geography of the soul likewise changes in no important particular. Just as that soil, filled with nitre, makes the spring unfit for quenching thirst, however sweet and refreshing the water itself might be if the solution might only rid itself of that which is within it; so the circumstances out of which, or through which, many a healthful impulse or ennobling emotion comes makes it bitter and worse than useless. What does God do for his Israel, in such a case? Israel always murmurs here. The soul, at such a pass, usually looks back to its old chains, where at least water was plentiful, and complains that following an ideal costs too much. Moses shared in their want and suffering; the best that is in us feels the agony as much as the worst, even if, like Moses, it has always the support which comes of a devoted love of high aims and has counted their cost. It nevertheless has to pay the expense of having an ideal. Then, as if in contrast, the less open-eyed and faithful qualities of our nature, like the children of Israel, cry out — it is all they know; it indicates the level at which they live — “What shall we drink?” Man is always asking this question at the brink of some bitter problem. So rich, however, is God’s universe, and so thorough is his education of souls that somewhere near the problem itself is *something*, which, if cast into it, will make it sweet. Here is the ancient record: “Jehovah showed him a tree, which, when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet.”² The Arab natives assured Lesseps that it was their practice to put barberry branches into such pools and that they made the water fit to drink. Josephus asserts that “bad water was once purified by throwing in certain split pieces of wood.” Life’s bitterest experiences exist to be sweetened by the use of unsuspected and medicinal facts, which also have no value until they are used in connection with difficulties.

It must be noted that hitherto, and far beyond this hour, Israel had found nothing of what our earthy political economy, with its fatal worship of statistics, calls wealth. Rich land and fortune-bearing streams do not appear. Jehovah builds the greatness of a people out of spiritual discoveries. Part of the permanent wealth of Israel lay in the bitterness of Marah and the healing barberry branches. It was realized, as such wealth is always coined, by the commanding influence of an idea; even as the rocks and thin soil of New England responded at a later day to the same Puritan spirit and made rich and heroic the New England character.

Another birth-hour for an everlasting principle, capable of being wrought into life and statesmanship, had come. The Lord “made for them a statute and an ordinance.”³ This was the ordinance: “If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and will give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am Jehovah, thy physician.”⁴ Here is a forelook toward Sinai and the lawgiving. That is a suggestive phrase: “all his statutes.” This statute which was then given was the statute which really included all succeeding statutes. Liberty is a child of law; and the deliverance of any

¹ Exodus xv, 23.² Exodus xv, 25.³ Exodus xv, 25.⁴ Exodus xv, 26.

people *from* the diseases of a despotism is first a deliverance of that people *to* a law that orders their conduct. There is no commonwealth where it is not true that duty is as important a word as privilege, and the responsibilities of citizens are as large as their rights. This is accomplished only *by* and *through* law. Obedience of law is fundamental to freedom. "I will walk at liberty," says the Psalmist, "for I seek thy precepts."¹ "There," says the sacred record, "he proved them." Moses never showed forth the divine statesmanship to better advantage. Not with prating about liberty, not with shouting about rights, but with allegiance to constitutional forms, seeking even desirable changes by constitutional methods, is any people "*proved*" worthy to take the next step Canaanward. To be "*proved*" unworthy, to fall into loud-mouthed praise of lawlessness, which is often miscalled freedom, is ultimately to contract the diseases of the Egyptians. The despotism of anarchy is the most leprons of all despotisms. In this way, among many others, God says: "I am Jehovah — Rophrek:" — *Jehovah — Physician*.²

Immediately before them, now, lay the green plot toward which the pillar guided their steps. It was a veritable oasis, *Elim*. Fortunate, indeed, for their education in that constructive idealism which looks ever Canaanward, as it wanders in the desert, was the fact that they came to Marah before reaching Elim. This Elim was the most important of the desert's water courses, "where were twelve wells of water, and three-score and ten palm trees."³ There "they encamped by the waters." A whole month went by, as their herds fed upon the fertile pastures. It was probably what is now Wady Gharandel. On they journeyed into the delightful Wady Taiyibeh. As was Elim, so all this route was in beautiful contrast with bitter Marah. For a time by the Red Sea they had encamped; the tamarisks were in bloom; the cattle had been well fed, but before them their path now entered a vast sandy plain, stretching to the end of the peninsula, called the Wilderness of *Sin*. Passing out of the Murkhah, through the Wady-en-Nash, they had found sweet waters, but at the edge of the wilderness they saw only famine and death. The last remnant of Egypt's plenty was gone. Provisions had failed. Moses was equal to the crisis. Still the bush that burned with fire did not consume away. The great leader, who knew the wilderness so well, knew also Jehovah. "Would to God," they cried to Moses and Aaron, "that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger."⁴

"Would to God"! — this marked the level of their faith. They had even dropped the memorial name, *Jehovah*, out of their vocabulary in the violence of their complaint. Without *that* idea of God in the mind, all progress toward civilization costs more than it comes to. Some one fact must hopefully relate past, present, future, else the jostling events crash against one another, or they are so separate that courage and faith are drowned in the unknown abysses that yawn between. God had proposed to build their nationality out of the motives and inspirations contained in the new and memorial name, *Jehovah* — "*I am that I am*." Under that new name they were to be educated. At this crisis, they had forgotten it. Surely, Canaan is far away. Egypt lay like a beautiful and vanished dream in yonder mist. This is an affair with *Jehovah*, as all human life is. Never has the *whole* congregation murmured before against *both* Moses and Aaron; now their complaining is unanimous. So does the stalwart captain understand it. Then said Jehovah to Moses, "I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they walk in my law or no."⁵ And Moses and Aaron, true to the inspiration flowing out of the memorial name, said to all the children of Israel: "At even, then shall ye know that Jehovah hath brought you out of the land of Egypt. And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of

¹ Psalm cxix, 45.² Our Revised Version says: "*I am the Lord that healeth thee*."³ Exodus xv, 27.⁴ Exodus xvi, 3.⁵ Exodus xvi, 4.

Jehovah; for that he heareth your murmurings against Jehovah: and what are we, that ye murmur against us?"¹

What a transformation is to be noted here in the soul of the chieftain; he is eloquent; he was once conscious only of being "slow of speech."² Moses has found that true personality which is strongest only when it has lost its self-consciousness in Jehovah. We may almost hear Jesus of Nazareth saying: "Not I, but the Father; he doth the works."

At evening, the air was filled with enormous numbers of flying quail. They faltered and fell upon the ground, until it was alive with wings. This does not seem to have been a strange thing in Egypt. Huge migratory flights of these birds often occur, and the weary birds fall in such numbers that they are easily taken, or killed by hand. The moment of their arrival, however, was divinely opportune; but perhaps not more so than is the moment of the most apparently commonplace event. Israel's eye was not spiritually quick enough to behold God in the ordinary; the burning bush had impressed Moses alone. Surely Jehovah is not less interesting and wonderful because he is present in all history, and utters his will through all nature and natural processes. This is part of the teaching of the long exodus. Next day, "when the dew that lay was gone up, behold upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small, round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another: It is *manua*: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which *Jehovah* hath given you to eat."³

It was natural that they said, "It is *manna*,"⁴ for the word *manna* means, "*What is this?*" Certainly the Hebrews did not think that it was only the "sugary exudation from the twigs of the tamarisk tree," though this has, as Geikie says, been called "man, or manna, from the earliest ages." "Possibly," as Ritter says, "the objection to this, that this tamarisk manna is only found for a month or two in spring," is answered by the fact that the Bible does not say that it fell every day in the year, but was, on the other hand, probably only an addition to the food that the Hebrews obtained in large quantities elsewhere. They made too much out of the event to allow us to think that it was only a "rain of manna," such as is known in the Orient. "There is," says Geikie, "an edible lichen which sometimes falls in showers several inches deep, the wind having blown it from the spots where it grew and carried it onwards." It has been suggested that both these theories have truth, inasmuch as there must have been two kinds of manna, one of which was "ground in mills or beaten in mortars," another of which would "melt in the sun." None of these, however, comport with the statement that a double quantity fell on the sixth day; and it is hardly to be supposed that, later on, the pot containing an omer of manna would have been preserved in the sanctuary, or that the Sabbath should have had its history so bound up with the double portion which does not become corrupt, if, to their thought, this was by any means an event less than miraculous.

It is more to the point, for us who have our lives to live, that we be assured of the rich teaching unto all ages contained in this story. The history of Israel is not only the history of a people and the ideas and inspirations which made them a nation, but it is also the history of the process by which, at least with one people, God reveals his will and educational method. In the attainment of genuine freedom, the only definition of liberty which endures is that which Jesus Christ gave and which the whole life of Israel proves true: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."⁵ Man is made free by the truth he knows in living experience. He knows it, only by trusting it. Of the coming of truth to man, and of the use of truth on this wilderness march, this history is perennially descriptive. A man, or a nation, gets just enough truth on hand for every day's supply, and the law of truth is that, if it is not used, like the manna, it grows untrue. The most untrue souls in our world are those who are like the children of Israel who disobeyed Moses' command, and sought to hoard the manna

¹ Exodus xvi, 6, 7.

² Exodus iv, 10.

³ Exodus xvi, 14, 15.

⁴ Exodus xvi, 15.

⁵ John viii, 32.

from day to day. These overwise persons pack truth up in the warehouses of accepted opinion, to be used at some future time, when the world shall hunger for it. Truth itself becomes a lie, unless it gets into flesh and blood at once. It is thus with all generous impulses, sweet sentiments, and blessed inspirations; they are most full of blessing when they are fresh from God's hands. The greatest people is the people that trusts the truth it sees absolutely and at once. No wise economy, or shrewd hoarding of truth, ever made a nation true. All fatal corruption of public sentiment comes from a heaven-sent truth, acknowledged and yet unobeyed—the omers of manna that wiseacres are keeping, because it is too valuable to be used up at present.

Again, this whole procedure of God was a forelooking to the creation and growth of that divine humanity whose life is in Christ Jesus, for the production of which every government exists and to which what we call civilization is ministering—a humanity that lives “not by bread alone.” How significant this episode of Israel's life is in the life of mankind may be but partially understood when we read the words of the Book of Deuteronomy, assuring us that this was its meaning: “By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, doth man live.”¹ It may be entirely understood when we go with the Son of Man into the wilderness where Christ was tempted. Here, as in the Wilderness of *Sin*, we feel the solidarity of the race: “Who is weak, and I am not weak?”² Satan has challenged the Christ of God and Man to make the stones into bread. It is a long way this side of that hour when the Hebrew exiles are gathering their manna, but Christ's victory was wrapped up in God's proving of them and humanity there. The old words come to his lips, “It is written,” he says, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”³ It was, indeed, a great hour of “*proving*” for all highest human interests in all time, when Jehovah gave Israel manna, and the law of its gathering and use; and Moses said: “He will prove you whether ye walk in his law, or no.”⁴ It led on to the hour when One such as was Savior came; and so heaven-sent and truth-incarnating was he, that he justly said: “Your fathers did eat manna in the Wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven.”⁵ It is not to be wondered at, that this training by symbols should afterward keep “the golden pot,” with its omer of manna, in the holiest of all, close by the rod of Aaron that budded and the tables of the Covenant, beneath the shining cherubim.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM THE FIRST BATTLEFIELD TO SINAI.

SOON the hosts of Israel, by following through the grandeur and beauty of Wady Feiran, entered their first battlefield. They had escaped Philistines and southern princes by their obedience of Moses; now, however, on the high plain opening out before them, walled by mountains, they were to meet Amalek, who held the springs. The table-land was called Rephidim. The great peaks of Sinai were lit up with all their many-colored splendors; and these gorgeous walls had long been in sight as they had led their flocks and herds, children and women, through Wady Maghara, near one of whose neighboring mountains, Dophkah, they had encamped. This spot was for ages the center of the Egyptian copper-mining region. From this place they had gone up to Alush. Here was nothing to compensate them for that weariness of body and soul which, amidst all this waste of rock and sand, had overtaken them. Perhaps

¹ Deuteronomy viii, 3.

² II. Corinthians xi, 29.

³ Matthew iv, 4.

⁴ Exodus xvi, 4.

⁵ John vi, 49-51.

here were found, in the ancient mines, some suggestions of the wealth which Egypt had drawn upon; but it was the Egypt now hopelessly lost. Again the cry, "Water! Water!" rose like a pathetic wail, and Moses heard it. Again, when they murmured, he reminded them of Jehovah. In accord with the divine command, he took the elders and the rod, which never meant so much as at that crisis, and as they approached a bare, brown rock, heated by the fierce sun, the rod was solemnly lifted up again. This time it smote the hardness of an apparently heartless circumstance; and a rivulet of water running forth was the testimony that the most granitic fact which confronts human progress under God, has God's overflowing heart throbbing within it.

Another lesson had been taught to human faith. As the multitude behind heard the splash of waters, so gracious in their music, and they rushed with shouts to partake of its refreshing, they became the ancient representatives of the multitudes in all ages, who, without knowing of the perpetual miracle, are yet blessed with the results of obedient faith of the faithful. In whatsoever hard and bare fact to which Jehovah has ever led any nation, or man, by that pillar of cloud and flame, there lie to be revealed and to be used the hidden resources of the divine. Only a rod, like that of Moses, may open its treasure—a rod which is the emblem of power used for noble ends. That rod is a serpent when thrown on the ground, evil as Egyptian despotism; but it is a scepter of beneficent strength, when exalted by the hand of faith, gracious as God's love. Faith in the heart of a people, hardened by conservatism and unproductive as stone of any generous enthusiasm, has made a great financier the conqueror of Napoleon, by the treasure of England which flowed forth at his word. Webster said most truly of Alexander Hamilton, when the latter stood before the barren and hard poverty of the early American nationality: "He smote the rock of the national resources, and abundant streams of revenue gushed forth." Everything yields to noble ideas and loving sentiments. Even the human heart, often as hard and apparently fruitless as that rock in Horeb, pours forth its concealed wealth of hope and love at the touch of a rod embodying a worthy ideal. Still more profound is this history with its proclamation of human hope. St. Paul, again reverting to his favorite chapter of the story of mankind for an explanation of Jesus Christ and his unique place as the central and organizing fact of history, tells us that this Horeb rock was only an emblem, that it followed them, and that "they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ."¹

It was while they were drinking of the stream that Israel's rear, where all the feeble and faint and weary were huddled together, was fiercely attacked by a tribe of natives. They were probably Edomites, descendants of Esau, through his grandson, Amalek. It was a religious war—they "feared not God."² Here the descendants of Esau might have vengeance on the descendants of Jacob. Moses saw and understood. Against Jehovah, his plans and purposes, the enemy had come. Joshua was called into conspicuous service for the first time. He was commanded to fight against them with a picked band from Israel's most courageous men. Again Moses found the rod of power. That rod was to be, also, a prayer, as every true power is. Ascending the height with Aaron and Hur, he saw the battle waged, its fortune turning with the position of his rod. When the rod, once a serpent—that emblem of power seized and used for noble purposes—was uplifted, all was well for Israel; when it fell, all seemed lost. His strung arms grew weary; Aaron and Hur stayed his hands. Sundown came. The Amalekites were routed, and the Lord proclaimed the utter destruction of the foe of Israel. Another and earlier crisis had added a new line and a touch of affectionate color to the portrait of the supreme power, which portrait was making itself on the soul of Israel, when God said: "I am Jehovah that healeth thee"—*Jehovah, the Physician*. Here and now, the mental picture received a similar addition. The Amalekites had despised the flag of Israel, on which *Jehovah* was written and rewritten by every experience. Because "the hand of Amalek was

¹ I. Corinthians x, 4.² Deuteronomy xxv, 18.



HOLDING UP THE HANDS OF MOSES.

upon the banner of the Lord," Moses built a monument altar, and called it "Jehovah-Nissi,"—" *Jehovah, the Banner.*"¹ So, in all ages, the evolution of the complete idea of God has come, through human experience. "Physician"—"Banner"; and all the other ideas and hopes which have been uttered by man's need, or yearning, or love, have been prophecies of Christ, who truly said, because he embodied each of them in his infinite glory: "*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.*"²

The successful battle with the Amalekites, a proud and numerous people called by Balaam "the first of the nations,"³ doubtless tended to solidify the mass of Hebrew fugitives, and, by giving them a new trust in God and a crude self-respect, prepared them for nationality. Sinai was very near—they *must* have law and government. But before the momentous hour came to Moses, he was permitted a most interesting incident in the strenuous life he was living. "The Little Bird"—Zipporah, his wife—and the two sons, Gershom and Eliezer, had been left with Jethro, his father-in-law, in Midian. To the wilderness where Moses "encamped at the Mount of God"⁴ now came this priest of Midian, bringing his daughter, Zipporah, and the two sons. Jethro "rejoiced for all the goodness which Jehovah had done to Israel."⁵ Whatever was Zipporah's opinion of the man who had declined to have her accompany him in his severe task, Jethro sent his servant before him to Moses, who received him with Oriental courtesy and affectionateness. The Midianitish priest had a profound sense of the greatness of Jehovah, and he professed it. He made burnt offerings and sacrifices, and then sat with Moses and Aaron and the elders at the sacrificial meal of fellowship. Both Moses and Jethro showed themselves men of true manhood during the whole visit. There is, however, a strange silence as to Zipporah and the sons. Moses will have an opportunity to prove his chivalry, as a husband, at a later time. But Jethro had a valuable contribution to make to the man who was marching Sinaiward.

Moses had undertaken, for the whole people, the settlement of each and every case in dispute. With this administration of justice among all the people, the judge had certainly been prepared for that next great act of statesmanship which he would be called upon to perform. He had been already a lawgiver. But what Jethro saw most clearly was this—his son-in-law and friend was "wearing away," and the delays of justice were so many, by reason of the overworked condition of their court, that the people were administering justice, or injustice, with their own hands. Never was there a more critical moment. Jethro offered his sagacious counsel, that Moses should divide these labors, appoint rulers of tens, of fifties, of hundreds, and of thousands, teach the people ordinances and laws, let the judges apply these to the cases brought before them, and, if any "great matters" made their appeal beyond the wisdom of these men, who were provided "from all the people—able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness"⁶—let these be brought to Moses, who should bring "the causes unto God."⁷ It was an impulse Sinaiward, modestly given by what has been called the Gentile world to that Hebrewdom which was about to receive, through the loftiest of her sons, a law which is the basis and organon of the jurisprudence of the civilized world.

The modern traveler, after having examined the extended literature pertaining to this fascinating subject, and having reverently visited what is now known as Mount Serbal's gigantic peaks, set about with pinnacles, parted only by abysses, and hallowed by hoary tradition, will probably turn to the traditional Mount Sinai, equally celebrated by the legends of monks and the presence of consecrated buildings, to find a sufficiently large plain for the encampment of Israel, while they received the law. Having failed to find such a vast open space, and a brook "that descended out of the mount," such as the Bible story mentions, he will follow the feet of other scholars, through valleys and over smaller ranges to Horeb, as the cliffs on the northwest

¹ Exodus xvii, 15.² John xiv, 9.³ Numbers xxiv, 20.⁴ Exodus xviii, 5.⁵ Exodus xviii, 9.⁶ Exodus xviii, 21.⁷ Exodus xviii, 19.

of the Jebel-Musa are called, and agree with Dean Stanley as he saw "the wide yellow plain sweeping down to the very edge of the cliffs, exactly answering to the plain on which 'the people removed and stood afar off,' " that here, after following up the Wady-es-Sheik until the huge plain of El-Raheh was reached by all the host, Israel stood, and, in the neighborhood of so much grandeur and an hour of such imperial significance, "all the people that was in the camp trembled."¹ In these eloquent words, Dean Stanley describes the majestic scenery about Sinai, to which they had now come: "At each successive advance, these cliffs disengaged themselves from the intervening and surrounding hills, and at last they stood out—I should rather say, the columnar mass, which they form, stood out—alone against the sky. On each side, the infinite complications of twisted and jagged mountains fell away from it. On each side the sky compassed it around as though it were alone in the wilderness. And to this great mass we approached through a wide valley, a long continuous plain, which, inclosed as it was between two precipitous mountain ranges of black and yellow granite, and having almost at its end this prodigious mountain-block, I could compare to nothing else than the immense avenue through which the approach was made to the great Egyptian temples." "The low lines of alluvial mounds at the foot of the cliff exactly answer to the 'bounds' which were to keep the people off from 'touching the mount.' The plain itself is not broken, and unevenly and narrowly shut in, like almost all others in the range, but presents a long retiring sweep, against which the people could remove and stand afar off. The cliff, rising like a huge altar in front of the whole congregation and visible against the sky in lonely grandeur, from end to end of the whole plain, is the very image of the 'mount that might be touched' and from which the voice of God might be heard, far and wide, over the stillness of the plain below, widened at that point to its utmost extent by the confluence of all the contiguous valleys." Here one may see how Moses might have descended from the height, as the sacred narrative relates, the host of Israel unseen, yet their shouting heard before he apprehended its real cause; and here also is a brook "flowing down out of the mount."

More than four thousand five hundred feet above the sea's level, the plain is confronted by the Horeb mountains, the loftiest peak attaining an altitude nearly three thousand feet greater than this, and between this plain and that height juts out the less lofty and altar-like elevation of Ras Sufsáfeh, where Moses took leave of the elders. Members of the Ordnance Survey found peaks behind this mountain, whereupon Moses, having been forty days alone with God, might have come down into the vale, hear the shouting, and unable clearly to perceive operations in the camp. At a spring which flows here, crystalline and cool, the Bedouin tradition does not hesitate to say Moses watered the flocks of Jethro, in those days when he was not an emancipator, but only a son-in-law of Jethro.

The imperial hour in the history of jurisprudence—the date of the revealing and the statement of those deepest and most fundamental laws which assure the success of the noble experiment of civilization, the opening moment of the era wherein justice itself became sufficiently just in human thought to be fearlessly trusted—this had almost come. As Israel drew near to it, the very approach of the revelation began to promise that specialization of Israel's life by granting to them a unique vision of God's ideal and thus imposing upon the Hebrew people a task so august and determinative in civilization that Jehovah said to them, in many ways, "Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."² This utterance was a stride toward the revelation of the ideal contained in Christianity. It was definitely to place the foundations of all civilization *in man*—not in things, not even in institutions, save as man's servants and helpers. It was also to intimate the sacredness of all humanity—"The earth is mine."³ It was to create a fervor of patriotism, accentuating in the Jew the gift of his genius

¹ Exodus xix, 16.² Exodus xix, 5.³ Exodus xix, 5.

and its particular visions, as not only royal, but priestly: not alone was he to rule, but to minister; and he was to rule, not primarily by might of institution, or by grant of invaluable territory, but by the sovereignty of organizing ideas and the gift of their realm of power. So was their kingdom to be priestly — “a kingdom of priests.”¹

Every nation has failed of genuine kingship which has failed to exercise such priestly functions as these. In quite another manner, as characteristic of God's providence, as truly emphasizing the gift of the genius of the Greek, did Jehovah call the Greek to a royal priesthood. Hellenic kingship did not vanish at the approach of Roman strength; for the Greek had made it a true priesthood unto all men. His life's inherent ideas were at once regulations, legislations, and ministrations to the life of the race. The Greek really separated himself from the barbarians, as truly as did the Hebrew from the Gentile world; not by a protest of words against barbarism, but by the force of his ideals. Discriminations founded on any other assumption than the possession of spiritual or intellectual treasures which they held in trust, always failed with both peoples. Ideas entering tasks as distinct as are the characters of nations alone preserve national individuality. God called the Greek to be an intellectual aristocracy, as he called the Hebrew to be a spiritual aristocracy, and both did he call to minister to all humanity. In each case, the unique and precious stream flowed between firm banks of patriotic conviction. The Greek was called to be an artistic nation — his Sinai revealed the law of beauty; God called the Hebrew, as we have seen, to be “an holy nation” — his Sinai revealed the laws of righteousness. Because holiness is the highest concern of all life, Jehovah has said, not alone in that hour but as well in all history, before and after Sinai: “Ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above *all* people.”² We never so truly appreciate the divine distinctions in the character and tasks of great peoples as at such places as this in the geography of the soul. “The great truth known to Israel,” says Rothe, “is that *God* — the great truth known to the Greeks is that *man* — is a moral, an ethical being; therefore, either eye of historical development belongs essentially to the other, and that, too, because both form an essential preparation for Christianity.” “What the new idea of God and the new notion of religion have done for man,” says Principal Fairbairn, “we may not attempt to tell. They have changed him within and without, strengthened all his moral qualities, created in him a nobler and sterner ethical spirit, exalted his ideal of manhood, brought elements into his social and collective life that have enormously enriched his civilization. Our order is not the Greek cosmos — the beautiful but merciless harmony that man could not but admire, that yet crushed without pity the man who touched it. Our order is the moral, the reign of the living and righteous will, which never spares guilt, but is ever merciful to the guilty. Our conception of the universe, of providence, of the law that is supreme over man and his destiny, is penetrated through and through with moral ideas. . . . Jehovah called Israel out of Egypt to serve him, and Israel's service of Jehovah has been in the noblest sense service of man.” Eloquent, indeed, does Gladstone also utter this truth: “Palestine was weak and despised, always obscure, oftentimes and long trodden down beneath the feet of imperious masters. On the other hand, Greece, for a thousand years, repelled every invader from her shores. Fostering her strength in the keen air of freedom, she defied, and at length overthrew, the mightiest of existing empires; and when finally she felt the resistless grasp of the masters of all the world, them, too, at the very moment of her subjugation, she herself subdued to her literature, language, arts, and manners. Palestine, in a word, had no share of the glories of our race; while they blaze on every page of the history of Greece with an overpowering splendor. Greece had valor, policy, renown, genius, wisdom, wit — she had all, in a word, that this world could give her; but the flowers of Paradise, which blossom at the best but thinly, blossomed in Palestine alone.”

¹ Exodus xix, 6.

² Exodus xix, 5.

CHAPTER X.

THE GIVING OF THE LAW.

NOW Israel trembled on the edge of a new era. "And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire. And the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly."¹ For many wondrous hours, in the awe-inspiring atmosphere of the promise and command of Jehovah, the whole congregation had listened to its own echoed pledge made by its leader. "All that Jehovah hath spoken will we do."² Three days of solemn preparation had passed. Amidst all these hours of purification and sanctification, they had mused upon God's goodness. "I bare you on eagles' wings," said Jehovah, "and brought you unto myself."³ At length, having gone up to the top of the first elevation, Moses had asked Jehovah's command. It was at once a covenant and a revelation — every newly discovered truth is a covenant between God and man, exacting the performance of the higher duties which it discloses; and it is also a revelation of God's conception of man's capabilities as well as a revelation of God himself. The bounds had been sacredly observed, and not an Israelite sought to "break through to touch the mount that burned with fire."⁴ Moses had already taken the pledge of Hebrewdom up to the mysterious height. To-day, "in the sight of all the people,"⁵ Jehovah will come down again. The "thick cloud"⁶ covered the mount. Thunders shook the crags and lightnings flamed and vanished above the awful place. Jehovah called his servant, and the eyes of Israel followed him up into the cloud. But lest any Israelite might transgress beyond the bound, he was sent down again. Moses and Aaron alone might come up into the presence chamber of Jehovah. Then over the mighty host, standing as one expectant man upon the plain, the voice of Jehovah sounded forth. Even Israel, exalted by sublime events, had not been trained to endure the grandeur of such a moment. At the utterance of the "Ten Words," the proclamation of Israel's constitution, the publishing of that Jewish code each of whose words establishes a principle for the whole race, "the people reeled backward and stood afar off." "And they said unto Moses: Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not. And the people stood afar off. And Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was."⁷

It is to be noticed that the penetrative soul of Moses was not hesitant in saying that all the sublime accompaniment to the issuing of this song-theme of civilization had not been given to inspire or foster fear in Israel's heart. It had all come, that they might learn the supreme grandeur of holiness. The organic ordinances had been spoken in the "Ten Words." Now that the foundations were laid and the constitutive principles enshrined in these commandments, the structure of civil law and judicial procedure might fitly rise upon them. As the people tremblingly had asked for the mediatorship of Moses, they made prophecy of that clearer demand which prophets and psalmists would discover in the human soul beseeching the mediatorship of the Christ of God. In this expressed desire for mediation, they were only going deeper still into the true conception of that almighty power whom they had called *Jehovah*. Indeed, the "Ten Words" were and are the complete utterance of that profound idea of God. They simply open up and restate that distinctive conception, as its behests and the hopes it enkindles reveal themselves in the life and conduct of man. They are the interpretation of the

¹ Exodus xix, 18.

² Exodus xxiv, 3 (Revised Version).

³ Exodus xix, 4.

⁴ Exodus xix, 21.

⁵ Exodus xix, 11.

⁶ Exodus xix, 16.

⁷ Exodus xx, 19-21.

memorial name, just as the colors and tints of grasses and flowers are the loyal and logical explication of the sunlight, revealing itself in the life which it touches and influences. The memorial name is not only the soul and reason of the "Ten Words," but it involves all that vast collection of ordinances, laws, codes, procedures, precedents, prohibitions, rules, and judicial statutes which their application to human life has furnished in the flight of more than thirty centuries. In their simplest form, they appear as follows:

"I am Jehovah, thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."¹

TABLE I.

Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.
 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.
 Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
 Thou shalt remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
 Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother.

TABLE II.

Thou shalt do no murder.
 Thou shalt not commit adultery.
 Thou shalt not steal.
 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.²

Upon these, the whole system of worship and civil economy rose, and, naturally enough, these commands are inspirational to the civilizations inspired and guided by the most progressive and constructive forces, for they are fundamental; they appeal to the depths of human possibility and to the heights of divine providence. They also created a new era. For, in these "Ten Words," closest sympathy is revealed between religion—man's attitude and action toward God, and morality—man's attitude and action toward his fellow-man.

It may be permitted here, briefly, to pause with these ideas and their new expression in the Jewish constitution. The prefatory declaration: "*I am Jehovah, thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage,*" is itself a statement of the fact that stable and just social organization has its genesis and birth in God. Such a background of history is an abundant and, indeed, indispensable resource and inspiration. It constantly invests a people with the presence of divine ideals—greater than they alone have been, or are; and it bids them march under the inspiration of a theory of government which summons every possibility within them into harmony with Jehovah's infinite plan. Thus this early declaration was the expression of that noblest Puritanism which has made the State one with the Church of God, in aim and achievement. Back of all human schemes or purposes, to give dignity and nobility to all their own ideals and movements, was the divine will, which, once at least, and in the nation's very birth-hour, had proven itself the soul of victory. To this will all their policies and ambitions, if they be worthy, *must* make appeal.

One by one, the five majestic commands of the first table unfold the true notion of Jehovah, and indicate the kind of worship due unto him. Monotheism had never so grandly uttered itself, as in that first command, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*³ Jehovah must be unique and alone in Israel's life, or Israel's life would vanish; besides this, the fact abided: Only the Jehovah of their worship is the "I AM THAT I AM,"⁴ in the whole universe. The second word was a divine provision for the spirituality of religion; and thus it was a plea for man's higher self. It does both of these services by its attack upon idolatry. Egypt had concealed the Eternal One in a multitude of symbols. Images of the infinite had

¹ Exodus xx, 2.² Exodus xx.³ Exodus xx, 3.⁴ Exodus iii, 14.



MOSES PRESENTING THE TABLETS

not only failed to represent God; they had positively left the higher regions of man's thought, and aspiration, and faith without a God worthy of worship. Sense had cheated spirit in creating countless images. "*Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image*," said Jehovah; and then only had the idea of God in the word an infinite future within the mind of man.

With such a new vision of the real significance of the memorial name *Jehovah*, in human thought and life, how natural and, indeed, consequential, is the third of these "Ten Words," enforcing the duty of reverence for the all-sacred and all-supreme. "*Thou shalt not lift up the name of the Lord thy God to a vanity*." This laid the foundation for the noble and ennobling awe, in the presence of the divine, which has uplifted humanity as nothing else ever has exalted, or may exalt, man's mind from low and vulgar associations. It was not alone a command against the profanity of a curse with God's sacred name; it was an effort of Jehovah to guard humanity against the desecration of that which is sacred anywhere and at any time. It makes man's soul sacred to live with awe in the presence of that which is truly majestic and awe-inspiring. Maurice was not less a statesman than a theologian when he said: "I hold no commandment to be more permanent, or more necessary for my nation and for me, than this one." Quite as logical was the next utterance and quite as consequential is its command: "*Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy*." No more truly gracious does this word of God seem than when, ages later, we hear Jesus of Nazareth say: "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." For this word of Jehovah, concerning his sabbaths, was to provide a mainstay for a nation of slaves, in their effort to realize the ideal of Jehovah, amidst the countless needs, and cares, and discouragements of their life. One day was set amongst the rest, to make man surer of his divine pedigree, to thrill him with divine hopes, to bring him up again out of life's commonplaces into sympathy with divine plans and make him able to look forward to his loftier self when the whole earth shall be the sabbath of the Lord God. "Rest" — that one word, spoken at that time, held infinite treasures for man; it has poured its fragrance of peace into all time. It was the bloom of this command. This law was not a whim of Jehovah; it sounded the deeps of human nature and builded on their foundations. As no true civilization then was possible without the sabbath, so to-day without it no apparently strong civilization is safe. The sabbath belongs to all time, so long as man endures.

Naturally, out of all this reverence for what is essentially sacred, came the command for the revering of the foundation stones underlying family life; and the last duty unto God is thus mentioned: "*Honor thy father and thy mother*." There is no reverence for Jehovah, or for anything that sanctifies life and exalts man, where there is no reverence for parents. This is a duty to Jehovah; for they alone stand for Jehovah in the opening life of Jehovah's human children. The family is the dearest and noblest organism in human civilization. It is the splendid distinction of Hebrewdom that, in Israel's life and in this command, progressive mankind escaped the baneful immorality of the old religions, learned the love of children, and made the household the source of a life so enduring and resilient as to leave this people unmatched in all human history.

On the second table were inscribed, in a very brief and rudimentary manner, that series of obligations constituting a code which for all time has bound religion with morality, and has taught mankind that the duties toward God are never performed except along with the duties toward man. Jehovah is behind *all* life. There is no "looking up" without "lifting up." The first of these obligations touches humanity at those crises in life when the relations of man and man produce friction, and the first impulse following opposition is to avenge a wrong done, or satisfy the demands of anger. "*Thou shalt not kill*" — this was the divine announcement of the fact that human life is always sacred. Protection for man's existence here, to work out his destiny, to fulfill his right to be and to be free on this earth — reverence for such a rich and divine gift as human life — these are all enjoined by this commandment.

How naturally, with that divine idea of the place of the household and family to which reference has already been made, proceeded the next commandment: "*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*" The home had its inviolable foundations made secure in this word of Jehovah. The future of human society could not have been guaranteed otherwise. All relationships of human beings, all the precious outflow of what is best and fairest in human life, all that is truest and sweetest in human memory or hope, were made sacred, guarded by a divine utterance, in his command. Out of pure households rises the loved golden age.

Next to this must be established the sanctity of property. In an age like our own, we appreciate the statesmanship which uttered this commandment. Civil society, even after these other questions are settled by the commandments of Jehovah, has no future, except when this foundation is placed beneath property: "*Thou shalt not steal.*"

But there is something besides a man's possessions to be kept. Dear, indeed, to all human society is truth; and justice is the bulwark of civilized life. "*Thou shalt not bear false witness,*" said Jehovah. Public righteousness is private reverence for truth and justice. A lie is the foe of social unity. Untruth in men makes the organism of civil economy untrue. Truth in every man as to every other man makes any man's life and honor safe.

At last, the law touched the very soul of all true life and social well-being. Selfishness had made and still was making Paradise a lost Eden. Only the noblest regard for others' lives, others' possessions, others' rights, may be able to make society worthy of its hopes and existence. "*Thou shalt not covet,*" said the Jehovah of Israel. Benevolence in every citizen is the atmosphere of a safe and stable social state; greed is its poison and death. Besides this, no soul may reach its rich and full power, with the evil demon of covetousness in the bosom; and it is the mission of society to bring out all there is of a man. From murder, the most brutal, to covetousness, the least rude — the law of Jehovah swept the scale. In the law's attitude toward this last sin, it touched the heart of man's moral life: Judaism had almost reached Christianity. It forbade even the feeling that would appropriate anything of any man's goods. It struck at the very intents of the heart. It prophesied a human society which is stable and glorious, only because man's heart is right.

Thus did the significance of the new and memorial name unfold itself to the genius of Moses on the sacred mount. God was no longer a name, but a power for righteousness in man's life. Jehovah was henceforth the living foe of iniquity, the reason of universal order, the pledge of ultimate and just civilization. His people's business in the world, ever after that moment, as they moved against the dark background of contemporary religiosity and pompous superstition, was to "make for righteousness." Standing for this, Israel was the sublimest spectacle in all the world. Israel possessed the ideals for both the Church and the State. These inhered in the law which was to be

"Sovereign law, that state's collected will,
 * * * * * * * *
 Sits empress, crowning good, repressing ill.
 Smit by her sacred frown
 The fiend dissension like a vapor sinks,
 And e'en the all dazzling crown
 Hides his faint rays and at her bidding shrinks."

CHAPTER XI.

ISRAEL'S SIN AND THE RENEWAL OF THE CODE.

ENGRAVED, as these "Ten Words" were to be, on tables of stone, this body of law was also to be kept in the sacred ark, while into the many-sided life of Israel their regnant influence should proceed through the subordinate laws, or ordinances, founded upon them. Elsewhere, in this work, these and the suggestive illustration they have are treated more at length. But we may be permitted, here, to say that these statutes, given by the hand of Moses, were really the terms of the covenant which Jehovah made. This covenant had its inauguration in solemn sacrifice, the renewal to their minds of that passover night in Egypt, and the meal of sacrifice. Moses himself sprinkled the altar with half of the blood, read the laws and ordinances, and the people answered: "All that Jehovah hath commanded will we do, and be obedient."¹ Then the rest of the blood was sprinkled over the representatives of the tribes. Truly it was "the blood of the covenant which God hath made"² with them.

Back to the sacred mount the great leader went with Aaron, his nephews Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy tribal representatives. The glory of God now revealed itself. Where a little time before was thick darkness, it now seemed "a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness."³ "They saw God, and did eat and drink."⁴ Sending Aaron and Hur back to the people, Moses took Joshua and approached the presence chamber of Jehovah. Then, alone, the lawgiver of Israel entered the cloud that covered the mount, and there he remained for forty days. Those forty days of absence put an intense strain upon Israel's spirituality and faith. It is easy to see them looking at the altar at the foot of the mountain, remembering the covenant made with Jehovah, counting the twelve pillars, while now and then the o'erstrained eye searches the distant cloud for a glimpse of Moses. All that heathenism possessed of charm, or dignity, now swept in upon the trembling heart of Hebrewdom. In the solitude and splendor of yonder cloud, Jehovah was giving to Moses and his people two tables of stone on which the law was written by the finger of God, and there Moses was beholding the pattern of the tabernacle. Here, below, thronged the memories and enchantments of Egyptian worship; and, having lost their mediator, the defenses of their souls were easily overcome; the visions of the old idolatry ruled; God must be made visible; and so did circumstance and panic, loneliness and desire flow into one another that it seemed that a golden calf came of itself to their fancied need. Aaron shows how unconsciously he himself yielded to the pressure of the stream, when he answered Moses and said: "They gave me gold. I cast it into the fire and there came out this calf."⁵

He had at first resisted. In vain had Aaron thought Israel would halt at the point where their golden ornaments were to be melted. But Israel only cried out in a riot of joy, when the form of the Egyptian god came forth: "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt."⁶ It was a fateful compromise, in which they were glad to worship Jehovah under the idolatrous Egyptian symbol. Even Aaron was willing to say of the feast which accompanied the event: "To-morrow is a feast to Jehovah."⁷

As Moses descended from the mount, though he held in his soul the pattern of the tabernacle, its priesthood and services and the divinely graven decalogue, all seemed lost. He would not wait to consider that it had perhaps been asking too much that a throng of Hebrew slaves, who, until recently, had blindly worshiped Apis and Mnevis, should so soon become

¹ Exodus xxiv, 7.

² Exodus xxiv, 8.

³ Exodus xxiv, 10.

⁴ Exodus xxiv, 11.

⁵ Exodus xxxii, 24.

⁶ Exodus xxxii, 4.

⁷ Exodus xxxii, 5.



RAPHAEL

ADORATION OF THE GOLDEN CALF.

a nation steadily enrapt with its vision of the Invisible. Truly, the leader had himself alone been close enough to the fiery cloud to keep its meanings clear. He looked with pitiful dismay and holy wrath upon the orgies which followed the feast presented to the calf. He had come down from the solitude of Jehovah, with a hint which Jehovah gave him of their peril, to behold this shameless din of idolatrous humanity. It was an awful distance spiritually — but it is traveled by every true lawgiver and reformer — from God's presence, where the source of law and the tabernacle of hope are, to the presence and condition of that disappointing humanity which they are to rule and to redeem. Even the mind of Moses was not comprehensive enough — only the mind of Jehovah as revealed in Christ has proved to be comprehensive enough — to hold in one faith and hope both the law and the lawless. Moses hurled from his arms the two tables of stone and broke them to pieces on the earth. It was an hour for righteous indignation. He approached the detestable golden calf and "burned it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water and made the children of Israel drink of it."¹ Always do we, in returning to our idols, repeat this ancient history. The circumstances seem to create the calf. Our religion becomes a low feast. We make our very lust devout and it utters pious phrases. Then the ashes of our idol are cast, as these were, into the brook that flows out of Sinai. We *must* get back to Sinai. The law we break is to be reckoned with. Law itself is full of grace. Each bears his sin's consequences: we drink of the water of that brook where the ruined idols are thrown.

But more than this must the stern lawgiver and emancipator, in that stern crisis, accomplish. He called the faithful ones; the sons of Levi responded with their naked swords. Justice is to be done. Here was a trial for the tender heart; but authority has gone. Government has perished. It must be restored and the rebellion crushed. That these were done, instantly, was testified in the three thousand dead men at the camp of Israel, and the ascent of Moses, pleading, as he made his way up Sinai again, for the pardon of Israel and Aaron. Only a great nation can slay its real foes and then forgive. Again, God had said — and this time he "waxed hot against them":² "I will make of thee a *great nation*."³ He would bind them once more to the cost of a great idea.

Israel was now in grief. Jehovah would not approach them, even for their own sakes; the glory would have consumed them. Loud lamentations were uttered and habiliments of sorrowful penitence were worn; and from Horeb even to Canaan, there were no ornaments upon them. Moses' tent was now more remote from the camp. Still salvation was at "the tent of meeting." The cloud was no longer in their midst; it was graciously in sight.

It is the story of a leader of which the soul is unworthy, an ideal in which for an hour the heart has lost its trust. Joshua was in charge of the leader's tent. At last, the pardon was granted. The old covenant was again full of vital forces and gracious influences. Once more Moses was ready to lead on; and, as though Jehovah would start him anew, with something like the encouraging impulse given aforetime at the bush that burned and was not consumed, he was placed in a crevice of the mountain of God. More and more did his penetrative mind and full heart say: "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence."⁴ He was where he had been when he saw that his personal victory over Pharaoh was not worth having. He knew that Pharaoh must acknowledge *Jehovah*; it must be *Jehovah's* triumph; and Moses must now be sure that Jehovah is the soul of the advance; he knows that otherwise it is not progress at all. "I beseech thee, show me thy glory,"⁵ prayed the leader. The divine answer came: "I will make all my *goodness* pass before thee: and I will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee."⁶ Hidden in the cleft of the rock, Moses saw the "back parts"⁷ of him, just as always the goodness that comes to us is the testimony that God *is* and is gone, to leave *goodness*

¹ Exodus xxxii, 20.² Exodus xxxii, 10.³ Exodus xxxii, 10.⁴ Exodus xxxiii, 15.⁵ Exodus xxxiii, 18.⁶ Exodus xxxiii, 19.⁷ Exodus xxxiii, 23.



NADAB AND ABIHU. STRANGE FIRE.

elsewhere. God's glory is his goodness — not his power, not his wisdom, not even his justice, not even his truth, related as these are in character; but his *goodness* is the deepest, truest reflection of Jehovah. Moses was leading to Christ, in whom "God is love."¹

Just as, at the hour of the burning bush, *El Shaddai, God Almighty*, became to a great soul in a crisis, *Jehovah*, "I AM THAT I AM," and as the evolution of the idea of God came nearer to that full conception and description of him contained in his son's saying: "*Our Father which art in heaven*,"² so here, at a new crisis in the faith of Moses and Israel, indeed, of mankind — a crisis quite as serious as the former — there came another forward impulse and movement toward the conception of Jesus Christ, for here the *goodness* of God was shown to be his real glory. It marks a stage in the race's theology. The test of a theology — which is man's view of the power that is supreme in the universe, the power with which, or with whom, he has to reckon — here and forever — is found in the morality, the conduct, which it inspires and establishes. Up to this later hour, the morality of Israel was not satisfactory even in such an essential point as worship; it had broken down amidst a glorious, though a trying series of events. For Israel had not yet answered to Israel's own heart the question: "O Jehovah, what is thy real glory?" Other nations before had made the *power*, or the *wisdom*, or the *justice*, or the *truth* of the Supreme One, to be its, or his, glory. No Sinai code could enforce itself in human nature, trained toward some better idea of their own life, as Israel had been, if human nature felt nothing better behind that law as authority, than *power*, or *wisdom*, or *justice*, or *truth*. Israel, through Israel's loftiest and deepest soul, had felt the influence of *goodness* in Jehovah, the covenanting God. The law alone was impotent, for there was, as yet, not enough of the Christly element — *goodness* — shining through it, to command and win loyalty. "All law," says Burke, "is *benevolence* acting by rule." That is to say, as history proves, Sinai's utterances are successful in producing morality by sympathetically attaching the governed to the energy behind the law. Thus this whole event is a Christian triumph, before Christianity was born. The law here, in its failure, is a tutor leading to Christ — goodness embodied — Jehovah incarnate. Moses had led the race's theology and theodicy to a loftier discovery. Behind the law of Sinai was infinite *power*, *wisdom*, *justice*, *truth*, with what is dearer and greater, for it included them all — *goodness*. Henceforth, as Moses descended from Sinai again with the law, again written on two tables of stone, his face did shine, and the decalogue had fortunes in human nature which it had not possessed before.

It does not belong to this part of this work to speak at length of the tabernacle, whose pattern Moses saw in the Mount of God. Its very building was such an atonement as bound Israel unto Jehovah. On the first day of the second year from the date of their departure it stood in the camp. The fiery cloud abided upon it; Jehovah was near. A special class of Hebrews was, of course, necessarily set apart, at once, for the performance of the duties consequent upon this new and important procedure. Moses had been the mediator; but his face had been covered, as he spake to Israel. Now steps were taken toward that day when the veil was to be "done away in Christ."³ The glory of Jehovah had "filled the tabernacle."⁴ We may almost hear the triumphant saying of John: "The tabernacle of God is with men."⁵ The whole Book of Leviticus has been called the code of Hebrewdom; it certainly represents the most wise and profound statesmanship, along with the truest religious spirit.

It was almost inevitable that even the priest should fail, at times, to illustrate this high spiritual economy. We soon find Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons, attempting to offer "strange fire before Jehovah."⁶ Even these of the tribe of Levi had faltered. Seven days of ceremonial at their consecration had not averted this awful event. Swift was the flame of Jehovah upon them, and Nadab and Abihu were no more. "Can it be," says Geikie, "that the prohibition

¹ I. John iv, 8.² Matthew vi, 9.³ II. Corinthians iii, 14.⁴ Exodus xl, 34.⁵ Revelation xxi, 3.⁶ Leviticus x, 1.

of the priesthood from tasting wine, or strong drink, before entering the tabernacle, which immediately follows the mention of the catastrophe, is a hint as to its cause?"

Another sorrowful event occurred before they left Sinai. The throng had included those who were gathered in the camp of Dan. One of the women, Shelomith, had a son whose father was a man of Egypt. Grown up and a member of the camp, at this time, he blasphemed the Name, and cursed. It was a shocking profanity, and — as if forever to show us that we are not ourselves to profane Jehovah in creating *ex post facto* law without ascertaining his will, thus making our ideas only human law without a divine sanction — the people, in the absence of any ordinance on the subject, appealed to Jehovah through Moses. The answer came; the blasphemer was taken out from the camp and stoned by the congregation. To profane the supreme power which is above all life *is*, even now, treason to any government: it ultimately makes authority impossible. And, as though this were to be recognized by Israelite and foreigner alike, it was proclaimed that this punishment would come to any blasphemer.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CENSUS.—THE WILDERNESS OF PARAN.—THE SPIES.

THE annual feast of the Passover had come, and it was duly celebrated. A census of those constituting the host of Israel was taken, and the number reached 603,550. This would certainly indicate a total population of at least two millions. Edersheim compares this census with that taken just before entering Canaan, as follows:

First Census. ¹		Second Census. ²
Reuben	46,500 (Prince Elizur, "My God the Rock")	43,730
Simeon	59,300 (Prince Shelumial, "God My Salvation")	22,200
Gad	45,650 (Prince Eliasaph, "My God that Gathers")	40,500
Judah	74,600 (Prince Nahshon, "The Diviner")	76,500
Issachar . . .	54,400 (Prince Nethaneel, "God the Giver")	64,300
Zebulun	57,400 (Prince Eliab, "My God the Father")	60,500
Ephraim . . .	40,500 (Prince Elishama, "My God the Hearer")	32,500
Manasseh . .	32,200 (Prince Gamaliel, "My God the Rewarder")	52,700
Benjamin . .	35,400 (Prince Abidan, "My Father is Judge")	45,600
Dan	62,700 (Prince Ahiezer, "My Brother is Help")	64,400
Asher	41,500 (Prince Pagiel, either "My Fate is God" or "My Prayer-God")	53,400
Naphtali . .	53,400 (Prince Ahira, "My Brother is Friend")	45,400
<hr/> 603,550		<hr/> 601,730

The firstborn, 22,273, were hallowed. The Levites were separately numbered, and became the helpers of Aaron in the tabernacle service. One family, the Gershomites, took charge of the tabernacle; the Merarites attended to the tent and its belongings; the contents and sanctuary vessels were looked after by the Kohathites. Moses had found a true friend in Hobab. The princes of Israel had offered rich gifts. The branched candlestick had been lit; the Levites were set apart. The twentieth day of the second month had come. The cloud of God's presence and the silver trumpets of Aaron were ready to give the command to march. The ark was on the shoulders of the sons of Kohath.

"Arise, O Jehovah, let thine enemies be scattered!
Let them also that hate thee flee before thee."³

¹ Exodus xxx; Numbers i.

² Numbers xxvi.

³ Numbers x, 35.

This song, sung ages later by Savonarola in his cell at Florence, and, later still, by Oliver Cromwell as he mounted the heights of Dunbar, poured its melody forth from the lips of Moses, and Israel was again on the march.

So great was the deposit of ideas which Jehovah had granted to Hebrewdom, and so rich were the treasures which Israel was to put in current coin, for all the social, political, and religious future of the race, that Jehovah counted upon thirty-eight years of their wandering, under his guidance, before Canaan should be theirs. So much does Jehovah depend upon the realization of ideas and aspirations to make "a great nation"¹ that, when any Canaan comes in sight, it is only a rich incident: the making of the *nation* is the essential thing. At most, a large and fair country is only an opportunity to be met and used by intellectual and moral power. Thirty-eight years have a short chronicle in comparison with that which recites the conception, birth, and culture of the power to meet that opportunity which Israel now but half possessed. They had become a nation; they had hold of the theocracy. All these years could do was but to teach them what it meant to humanity, and still means. Only thus could they truly *possess* Canaan.

They moved toward the wilderness of Paran. Three days, and the pillar halted. They were murmuring, not in ignorance, as aforetime, as at Marah and Sin: better things ought now to have come from them; and a conflagration broke out in one of the encampments. Again they cried unto Moses; again Moses cried unto Jehovah. The fire was quenched; but from its embers was lit the hateful spirit of mutiny; and now they were to pay the penalty for such associations as they had permitted with the mixed multitude which had come along. These adventurers demanded flesh to eat. They pictured the garden they had left to the hungry Hebrews. It was contagious; and the cry for flesh to eat came to the discouraged Moses. At length he said to Jehovah: "I am not able to bear all this people alone. If thou deal thus with me, kill me."² Such men as Moses, and only such large souls, cast such heavy shadows, and have to look through them, when the sun is at their backs. Moses' mediatorship was not that of Christ. Its very breakdown, as its success, led to Christ. Necessities like these are the mother of governmental inventions. The senate of seventy, with Hur at the head, had been chosen by the people. It was a sublime step. Already the theocracy had shown itself to be the pledge of all thorough and safe democracy. But the people were crying for meat. The Edomites were on one side; the Amalekites were on the other; the Amorites were in front; behind was Sinai and—Egypt's garden of plenty. They were on a chalky plain, waterless, save for a few springs, flinty, also, and alive with scorpions and serpents. Their previous history, quoted and explained by Moses, did not feed them. In their semicircle, sat the senate of seventy; and lo, the spirit of prophecy came upon them, and upon Eldad and Medad, who had been designated, but had not been chosen. Even Joshua himself missed Jehovah's meaning, for he came to Moses with a scheme to forbid them to prophesy. Then, as a jewel which was hardened by this dreadful experience but was worth all that it cost, came the magnanimous utterance of Moses, opposing all jealousy. "Enviest thou for my sake? Would to God," said he, "that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them."³ A really great man is never jealous. And now the bread question was settled. The quail came in flocks; and, so truly did lust become its own punishment, that Israelite and Egyptian gained a pestilence from their surfeit of food. The place was called Kibroth-Hattaavah—"Graves of Greediness."⁴ Verily, it is a long way to any true Canaan. "He gave them their request, but he sent leanness into their soul."

Only our loved ones are able to hurt our hearts. Yet it is never far, for any Moses, from Kibroth-Hattaavah to Hazeroth—the name of Israel's next station. Probably Moses had been married a second time; and, if so, his wife, an Egyptian, was no more satisfactory to his

¹ Genesis xii, 2.² Numbers xi, 15.³ Numbers xi, 29.⁴ Numbers xi, 34, 35.

sister Miriam than Zipporah, his first wife, had been helpful to the leader of the Hebrews. Miriam began to talk against her brother, on his wife's account, and soon Aaron joined his utterances to the abominable scandal. They had lost something of their interest in worthy themes, as persons always do when they begin to look out after the family matters of their friends and relatives. The prophetic gift had not made them humble; and a not unusual method was adopted to discredit the unique character of the person criticised. "Hath not the Lord spoken, also, by us?"¹ they said. Older than Moses, of the same family, his importance they could not bear. Their action stung the modest, chivalrous soul of the man who had always avoided preëminence. They were his foes. On the other hand, he had made them all they were. Moses was silent; but Jehovah spoke to them from the pillar of cloud: "Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold; wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"² But more than speech, when the cloud removed, Miriam was white with leprosy. Such a spirit, in anyone, is leprosy — loathsome, contagious; and, as here, Aaron, who shares it, is usually doomed, as was he, to declare Miriam leprous. The only thing to do, in such cases, is to follow this example, and put Miriam out of the camp. Then love and pity worked. The great-hearted Moses interceded, and, seven days after, Miriam came back restored.

Then followed an event which marks a turning point in Hebrew history. They were in the Wilderness of Paran, *Kadesh-Barnea*. Every step of their advance has been followed by modern travelers. It was "the stronghold of the Amorites," and a little north of it begins the Negeb, or the "south country" of Palestine, which reaches nearly to "Beersheba, where the Promised Land really begins." There is even yet every witness that it was then fertile and fruitful. Out of a rough and mountainous district they had come to this series of plateaus. Every eye strained Canaanward, as they came to the wady famous from Abraham's day to ours, where they rallied the host. Moses had not yet become used to disappointment, even though he found its value through his year's stay at Sinai; and he now anticipated projecting an invasion straight through to the goal. But before giving the order to advance to Canaan, he concluded with the people to send spies from Kadesh — a picked band of chiefs from the twelve tribes. They were duly instructed and clothed with all the dignity of the hour and purpose. Every item of information as to land and water, roads and peoples, was to be obtained. The embassy started. Avoiding the warriors of Canaan, making a detour by leaving Ain Gadis to the north, entering the mountain district, Caleb and Joshua led "unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath."³ Descending by Hebron, they reached the route to the Negeb; and lo, the vine-clad country was luscious with grapes. Forty days had elapsed, and they returned, laden with the enormous clusters of Eshcol. Before Israel's joy uttered all its excitement, the commissioners, who had been sent forth solely because the Israelites were not courageous enough to make the invasion in Jehovah's name, related to them a series of facts which showed Israel's lack of true valor and faith. "Only the people is strong which occupieth the land, and the cities fortified, very great, and also descendants of the Anak have we seen there"⁴ — this was their hesitant message to timid Hebrews. Caleb and Joshua, faithful to the idea that Jehovah is all and in all, did their utmost to stay their panic; but, so great was the general despair, that "the congregation lifted up their voice and cried"⁵ the whole night long. It was the old pitiful unbelief that again put Canaan far away, though its edge might have been seen from yonder mountain tops. They moaned for the low securities and safeties of Egypt's slavery. Their fear of death at the hands

¹ Numbers xii, 2.² Numbers xii, 6-8.³ Numbers xiii, 22.⁴ Numbers xiii, 28⁵ Numbers xiv, 1.

of Canaanites made them wish they had met death under Pharaoh — so strange is the introversion of doubt. They proposed to choose another general, that they might return. Moses and Aaron could only prostrate themselves, dumb before Jehovah, almost disheartened by the din of mutiny about them. When Caleb and Joshua ventured to speak words of faith in Jehovah and his power to lead them against all foes whatsoever, Israel demanded that they should be stoned. It was a rejection of the Almighty One which outraged Jehovah's forbearance. He declared he would smite them with a pestilence; and, faithful still to his promise that "a great nation" should be made, he proposed to make it out of Moses — "a minority of one with God." Quality, not quantity, makes greatness rather than bigness. This roused the mediator, and brought out his real greatness. "The glory of Jehovah appeared in the tent of meeting to all Israel."¹ Moses pleaded, and his argument before Jehovah — a prayer of eager faith, shot through and through with javelins of doubt — is an heroic appeal. It goes deep into the nature of Jehovah — the God of the covenant. It claims all the resources of goodness, which is Jehovah's glory; and it claims them for disobedient Israel. The answer was: "Jehovah will preserve the nation"; but not a man of age, save Caleb and Joshua, will be permitted to enter Canaan; and, according to the number of the days which the spies spent in searching, shall be the number of their years of wandering. The old stock must die off. A more valiant nation must grow up to enter Canaan. The other ten spies were smitten by the plague.² Jehovah's judgments are not arbitrary; they coinhere with the nature of truth, and man, and God. Responsible and rebellious belief *cannot* enter any Canaan. The impossibilities rise out of the nature of the mind itself. Doubt is a death-laden plague to all souls that have already been at Sinai and heard the law.

Now the pendulum swung from this utter faithlessness to audacious, unguided presumption. They leaped at the Amalekites and were sorely repulsed. Moses and the ark of the covenant of Jehovah had not gone with them, in this attack. First, they had forgotten Jehovah in the faithless weakness which feared such as were the Amalekites; now they had forgotten Jehovah in their self-willed assertion of power. The result was, Canaan was theirs yesterday; to-day it is thirty-eight years away.

Of that thirty and eight years, we have but the slightest chronicle; but the events which have come to us from the hands of the historian are all determinative and character-making in the life of Israel and Moses. From Kadesh, "after many days," they moved "by the way to the Red Sea."³ Across this great series of plains, broken with chains of hills and many wadies, the loftiest plain being about two thousand feet above the sea, the vast procession marched, slowly learning the nature and cost of freedom. Modern travelers have found how easily this wilderness could have sustained the multitude of Israel and their flocks and herds. Water is easily obtained, reservoirs were doubtless made in the torrent-beds, and Egypt had taught Hebrewdom the practice of irrigation. Doves flew thick through the summer air; and herds of camels, goats, sheep and asses fed along the uplands and valleys. Here they would not utterly perish, although they must wait long to learn that the freedom and self-government, which, with Jehovah, is not heroic enough to overcome the Anak-children of passion and sordid ambition, and the Canaanite prejudices and hostilities which every truth encounters, *as well as* to enjoy the Eshcol clusters of blessing, is not worth having even as an unearned gift.

Two rebellions — each of which deepened the character of the loyalists of Israel and helped to exemplify the real nature of just government — occurred in the wilderness. A man was caught gathering sticks on the sabbath day. Amidst our contemporary sabbath breaking, little knowing how surely the life of man grows unsacred with the decay of such institutions, and that, in consequence, much of the anarchy of the day may be its product, we are amazed at the instant and awful punishment which came upon the offender. The law was

¹ Numbers xiv, 10.² Numbers xiv, 20-38.³ Deuteronomy i, 40.

inexorable. There it stood on the statute book of Israel. The sinner suffered the punishment of death. Perhaps soon, either by revolution in society, or by the evolution of a true social morality, we may see that such punishment is merciful, as compared with the slaughter of men and hope consequent upon our forgetting man's right to a day of rest and his duty to use it as God ordained.

CHAPTER XIII.

KORAH'S REBELLION.—MOSES' SIN.—DEATH OF MIRIAM AND AARON.—BALAAM.

THE government of Israel under Moses was to meet a fresh peril. Korah, a Levite, was a full cousin of Moses. It was almost natural that he should claim priestly rights and privileges. Other firstborn Israelites made like demands. Soon, two hundred and fifty like-minded men, chiefs from the tribes, joined him in conspiracy. Dothan and Abiram, and, for a while, On, who were of the tribe of Reuben, the first son of Jacob, added their power to the movement against Moses and Aaron. It was hateful envy uttering its criticism, when the conspiracy spake to the leaders of Israel. They paraded their conservatism, and asked for the old ways. Moses was unshaken in his trust of Jehovah. Next day, according to his arranging, the contumacious rebels were made silent. Before the altar of Jehovah, Korah and his troop assembled, and taking their censers, made the attempt to prove before Jehovah their right to the priesthood. The censers were ready; Jehovah spoke to Moses and Aaron: "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment."¹ The magnanimous Moses could only beg in intercession. Aaron joined in the prayer. The congregation was saved; but Dothan and Abiram were swallowed up as the earth opened beneath them; Korah was destroyed; and the two hundred and fifty chiefs of Israel were consumed before Jehovah's tabernacle. The entire camp had waited, in sympathy with the revolt. They cried out upon Moses and Aaron: "Ye have killed the people of Jehovah!"² Jehovah answered their disloyalty with a plague, and, as if to picture for us One who is even now our High Priest and Savior, Aaron himself, with a censer filled from the altar, ran "into the midst of the congregation"³ "and put on incense, and made atonement for the people."⁴ Nearly fifteen thousand had perished, but the plague was stayed.

Peace after storm! Up in the most holy place, in the ark of the covenant with Jehovah, were laid the rods of rulership. Each rod was an emblem of government, and tribal unity, and hope. Each bore the name of the prince of that people. Dawn had come after the day of death, and "behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi had budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds."⁵ True priesthood is always full of unsuspected vitality; and history, like Israel, preserves Aaron's budding rod in the ark of the covenant with the pot of manna.

The weary-footed years came and went, as this pilgrim throng met the perpetually new demands of social life, compelling them to add to the statute book the laws accordant with the "Ten Words." They were thus giving fresh illustration of the vitality of those principles, as their life developed unforeseen crises in the commonweal. Thirty-seven years of wandering did nothing to create an antidote for old age, as Moses journeyed with them; and, in the assertion of Jehovah that a new generation must come to enter Canaan, with Caleb and Joshua, even the great emancipator's hope was swept away. As yet, there seems to have been no realization of this. But his heart-fiber had been most cruelly worn by the people unresponsive to the call of

¹ Numbers xvi, 21.

² Numbers xvi, 41.

³ Numbers xvi, 47.

⁴ Numbers xvi, 47.

⁵ Numbers xvii, 8.

Jehovah. They had, at length, swung round through these thirty-seven years, and again they camped in the region of Kadesh. A new generation had come; the old was nearly gone. Only five remained to talk over the memories and hopes of that first footstep taken toward freedom — Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Caleb, and Joshua. Miriam's voice had led their exultation and song for the last time. Now, with solemn pageant and general lamentation; the brothers joined the procession which bore her dust to the tomb. The cords which bound the aged law-giver to earth were breaking; and yet it was as though Jehovah had imposed upon him a new task, to lead this younger band to Canaan. Kadesh, years ago, as we have seen, had been the place of God's judgment against Israel's unbelief; just there Israel's new faith must now begin its militant career. The belief with which we finally triumph has its birthplace where the unbelief by which we failed was smitten down.

At such places, even a Moses is in peril. The people are again thirsty; springs had vanished, and the torrent-beds were dry. The old cry of disappointment, reproach and censure came to the strained and tired leader. What could be done? Was not the rock struck at Rephidim? But Moses and Aaron are commanded this time to *speak*, not to *strike* — first the natural; afterward and *now*, the spiritual. The people seemed so rebellious that the temper of Moses was lost. "He spake unadvisedly with his lips"¹ to the stupid, faithless throng. In this, he showed his lack of faith in Jehovah; and more, he exemplified a strange doubt by declining to command the crag. He struck it, as aforetime, with his rod. The water came, but Moses had lost a more valuable treasure. He had struck it; and he had struck it twice. It was a defeat of Jehovah's purpose in the heart of his servant Moses. Jehovah had a right to a faith, upon the part of Moses, that had grown to perfectly trust the Infinite, in method and result. Anger with men is, at root, infidelity with God.

Canaan was far away from the noble leader: only so majestic a character could have made so vast and limitless a distance between himself and his goal. The consequence came; Moses and Aaron were excluded from entering Canaan. At length, the mediatorship of Moses has drawn toward its end, as all human mediatorship must. It is with the aid of such a single dark moment of his faltering faith that we behold the grandeur of his life.

Again he proves his kingliness of soul and the fact that Jehovah uses the humanity which has once failed, as he asks the kings of Edom and Moab to allow Israel to pass through these dominions. It was the easiest and nearest way to the entrance of Palestine. Moses pleaded kinship with them and God's providence to a suffering people, but in vain. He promised, also, to use only the great roadway. Esau's children were stubborn to Jacob's descendants, and they gathered their warriors. But while the commissioners of Israel tarried, Israel moved eastward through Wady Murreh to Moserah, or Mount Hor. Here the roads opened for them. But, before they advance farther, the breaking of a still more tender cord was to prepare Moses for his own departure. Here Aaron died. The picture is pathetic and sublime. Two old men ascend the height with a young man; they are Moses and Aaron with Eleazer. Afar below them is Hebrewdom; beyond is the land of hope. Slowly and solemnly the great priest is unclothed; the sacred garments of his august office one by one are taken from Aaron, the man who is to die, and presented to Eleazer, his son and successor, who is to live. The splendid past is passing into the hands of the glorious present. At last his soul has gone to Jehovah's presence. "And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel."²

Meantime the messengers returned, and hostile Edom was upon them. The foe was so situated that Israel must retreat. A detour was made which took the Hebrew army far to the south, by Gudgodah and Jotbath. Here at a turn in the route, the Canaanitish "king of Arad, which dwelt in the South, fought against Israel and took some of them prisoners."³

¹ Psalm cvi, 33.² Numbers xx, 29.³ Numbers xxi, 1.



RAPHAEL

MOSES AND THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

This dreadful fate rankled in the hearts of the Hebrews; and there the vow was made, to be kept in bloody history after many years, that the cities of Canaan should be utterly destroyed.

They now moved along the head of the gulf of Akaba, north of Ezion-Gaber, toward Moab. It was in this region that, once again, the hosts of Hebrews knew the horrors of thirst. Again they failed to rely on Jehovah; and the bitter reproaches rose to heaven. It is a land where travelers of to-day encounter multitudes of red and fiery spotted serpents. At that hour these venomous creatures fell upon the helpless army, wounding them to death. Moses was here commanded to make a brazen serpent—perhaps more nearly copper-colored—and place it upon a pole; and Jehovah promised that whoever looked upon it should be healed. Christianity has found in this a richly suggestive prophecy of Christ—human as sin, healing quickly and perfectly, the one freely-offered remedy for sin. Surely, the seed of the woman has bruised the serpent's head, though the serpent has stung his heel.

On toward the goal the throng advanced, probably along the very track which is still the path of commerce from the city associated with the conversion of Saul of Tarsus to the city associated with the prophet of Islam. Crossing Zered, a brook, they found pastures in Moab. Rejoicing in the luscious green along the banks of Arnon, they could see Engedi; and, as they advanced from well to well, they filled the ravines with echoes of their singing. As out of the triumphant feeling which swelled in Israel's breast when the Red Sea was passed, there came their national anthem: so here, in Moab, where the wells were crystal fountains, some of the finest of the Hebrew lyrics were born. Commanded to leave Moab unharmed and the descendants of Lot unhurt, they besought Moab and the land of Ammon for a peaceful passage, but in vain. The Ammonites were in no condition for war. Sihon of the Amorites had just despoiled them of a large territory. They asked safe passage of him, also in vain. From their camp at Kedemoth they were compelled to go as hostiles. Sihon was defeated. Israel was supreme over a large area between the Arnon and Jabbok, and the height of Hesbon was theirs. Songs broke forth, to echo through the poetry of all time. Another invasion followed to the north. Og of Gilead and Bashan, the ruler over a rich pasture and woodland, fell before the men of Reuben, and Gad, and Manasseh, who had leagued themselves with Ammon. At last, the capital, Edrei, fell: and even Kenath—yielding to the hornets (a common plague) and Israel—succumbed with sixty fallen cities, which, one by one, made it possible for the Hebrews to claim the whole of the land east of the Jordan. The camp was pitched near the junction of the Jordan with the Red Sea; and it appeared that a complete conquest was only a question of a short time.

At this moment, terrorized Moab employed the weird and magic arts which only such a man as Balak, "the Spoiler," might summon. The darksome art and artifices were potent, at least in the fancy of the age. A hundred incantations and imprecations have drifted down to us from that credulous and fearful time. The last energy of Moses was to be employed against this fascinating superstition and the genius of one of its masters. Balak, king of Moab, sent for Balaam, the subtlest and most acute of soothsayers. He came from the old land of Abraham. He had abundance of orthodox phraseology, and a clear title to the realm of divination. God had not, even in Balaam's section of humanity, left himself unwitnessed. He had every quality and aspect, habit and method, of a real prophet of Jehovah. He was as much an enigma to Israel as he is to the scholar of to-day. He behaved entirely and heroically faithful to Jehovah, for only what Jehovah gave him to say, would he say. He seemed, even when he would, to be unable to charm or bewilder Israel by enchantments. His life and its outflow was a mixture, like his character, of paganism and true religion. He was ready for any sacrifice to Jehovah; yet he actually sacrificed to idols and ate their feasts. He said piously enough to the messenger of Balak: "Get you into your land: for the Lord refuseth

to give me leave to go with you ;”¹ and yet his evident desire to go bore fruit finally, for the heathen anger suggested the means of injuring the people of Jehovah. When he refused to join his forces to Balak's scheme, the Midianitish sheiks came to the latter's help. Israel was to be seduced by their obedient women. The abomination was awfully effective. It was a frightfully dark moment for Moses ; for nameless iniquity through impure and shameful rites threatened again to place Canaan farther away. The ugly evil imperilled Israel's hope ; time was short for the old statesman ; it was the hour for the surgeon's knife, and Moses commanded the hanging of their heads before the sun. A dreadful plague came also and left twenty-four thousand Hebrew corpses. It was stayed only by Phinehas, the high priest, grandson of Aaron, who slew two of the sinners in their riot of evil. Midian also was humbled, all her male population being made a sacrifice. Kings and princes fell ; and the most significant death of all was that of Balaam the soothsayer. Unable any longer to remain both pagan and believer, magician and servant of Jehovah, he perished with the royal house of Midian. Clear-headed and courageous indeed were the sagacity and statesmanship of the man who dealt thus with such a man and such a crisis. Yet Balaam must be called a prophet, if ever the foregleams that describe future events of supreme meaning may be said to indicate the prophetic power. As he falls, his lips tremble with the foreseen fate of Israel made captive by Assyria ; and we of this nineteenth century of Christianity find him increasingly eloquent, as time moves on, saying : “ There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.”² Any less comprehensive and self-poised soul than was Moses would have been amazed into powerlessness or dazzled into unfaithfulness ; but the situation and the foe were grasped by the hand of trained power.

CHAPTER XIV.

A GREAT CAREER CLOSING.—THE CHARACTER OF MOSES.

THE Hebrew chieftain had met his last distinguished foe. These last years had deepened and exalted him ; and nothing in all their flight did more to make him receptive of Jehovah's call to final judgment than that event, so dark and yet so flooded with light, which had prevented his entering Canaan, before entering heaven. Moses sinned, yet Moses was a man of genuine sainthood. Not until the experience of victory over sin and a triumph over the consequences of some special sin, like that of the Hebrew leader at the Rock of Kadesh, have come to a soul, has that soul met and found the real meaning of human life. Such men as Moses are of those who at last walk upon “ the sea of glass mingled with fire.”³ Principle is so permeated with passion, passion is so clarified and crystallized by principle, that such a character is at once the most perilous and the most safe of God's creations.

The last intimation given to Moses by God that the prophet would not be permitted to enter Canaan, on account of this sin, was met by that loyalty which besought God to appoint his successor. Joshua was set apart, by Moses laying on his hands. He was to be the captain of Israel, but directed in all his larger activity by Urim and Thummim. This direction of the younger general made Moses all the more lonely and sublime. He had been on such terms with Jehovah as to speak with him face to face. His work, however, was done. Pathetic indeed is the entreaty of Moses to “ see the good land.”⁴ Like many others — the greatest of

¹ Numbers xxii, 13.

² Numbers xxiv, 17.

³ Revelation xv, 2.

⁴ Deuteronomy i, 35.

the sons of men — the inspirers of progress, the workers in invention, the heralds of discoveries, the searchers for truth, the foes of evil, the lovers of righteousness — he could not have Canaan; but Pisgah — beneath whose height the landscapes stretched from memory to hope, from history to prophecy — Pisgah was his. From the summit, looking westward, he saw far away the regions about the sacred city; yonder was Bethlehem, to be known as the birthplace of Jesus; and, resting his eye on a nearer spot, he beheld the heights of Hebron. Yonder, on the south, rose Mount Hor, and from the adjacent valley came voiceful memories. Toward the east, there unfolded a boundless meadow and harvest field. On the north were the plains and mountains, Esdraelon, Gerizim, Tabor, Gilboa, to be remembered, or to be hallowed, by the prophets, singers, kings, and saints of Israel; and everywhere, from the far-off mists hanging over Arabia to the summits of Benjamin, and from the purple line of Bozrah to the frowning bastions of Mount Seir, there was for the eye of the old warrior-statesman, who now sat on Pisgah, a vision of the land which must have suggested to him the future opportunities of the race, as Israel might lead and inspire it. His ascent had been slow. The people below had followed him, every eye straining to behold him through the tears of an orphaned nation. They had already been echoing in their hearts the wondrous song which the leader of Israel had uttered — a song which makes prophecy out of history, completing its harmony with such melodies of nature and life as one hundred and twenty years of life had given to the singer. They felt the air trembling still with the farewell address of the father of his country — an address unequaled by any Washington, filled with that comprehensive statesmanship and holy hope which made Charlemagnes, Alfreds, and Washingtons possible. But now he vanished from Pisgah. He had died “at the mouth of Jehovah,” or, as Hebrew story has said, “by the kiss of the Lord.” “And no man knoweth the place of his burial unto this day.”¹

At the edge of that unknown grave, the man of ideas, devoted to their championship, and fearless in their supremacy, stands at this day to count over the names of earth's true idealists, and to find Moses' stature growing more sublime, as glittering errors fade, outgrown institutions crumble, prejudices retreat, and truth finds her throne. Hither come and camp on heroic ground the soldiers of earth, and, losing nothing of admiration for the resolute sagacity of Alexander, the sober accuracy joined with intuitive power of calculation in Cæsar, the calm contempt for foes which rose from the religious faith of Oliver Cromwell, the constant energy and unfailing readiness of Frederick the Great, the splendid audacity which throbbed from the unequaled egotism of Bonaparte, they agree that a man who, at the Red Sea, at Marah, and Horeb, having gathered a formless and untrained mass of men, to whose hands hundreds of thousands of women and children were clinging, and having transformed them into a sword to crush Egyptian despotism, created a path over deserts and mountain ranges, through the Amalekites, Edomites and Canaanites, unto the goal of his hopes, must have possessed the highest qualities of a great captain. To that unmarked sepulcher, journey the souls whose fiber has been made for freedom, and whose instinct is liberty; and, surveying the relics of empires whose law was only an arbitrary commandment, studying the chaos that hurtles on to ruin with the anarchy which eulogizes license, they consider that figure at Sinai the noblest in the history of jurisprudence and civil liberty, that mountain the tallest of earth's heights spiritually, until there were revealed the figure of One whose love is law, and that mountain, named Calvary, where equal rights and an ideal of perfect freedom began to write the state papers of Christendom. Our common manhood rears in that valley, where God buried Moses, its memorial, more enduring than brass, more white than marble, more rich than gold. He had sublime self-restraint with mighty passions. He was jealous for God, and he rebuked jealousy for himself. He was modest without losing his self-respect, humble without fearing the face of armies, or of men. He was kingly in the hours when most men are commonplace, and

¹ Deuteronomy xxxiv, 6.



NICOLAUS POUSSIN.

MOSES DEFENDING THE WOMEN.

sympathetic with weakness when most men are irresponsive and unapproachable. His dignity was the result of that self-command which is the result of being commanded by the Almighty alone. His intellect lay so close to his conscience that his insight into moral problems was unerring, and its judgment was the voice of Jehovah. His will was so enfolded with a will diviner than his own, that it made its appeal to the Infinite Resource and rested on Omnipotence. With majestic tread, he entered on the path to spiritual discoveries; and the weight of his character and the importance of the need of constantly greater supplies from God, as he advanced, were answered by such unfoldings of the divine nature and such gifts of hitherto unrevealed truth, as furnished inspirations and sanctions to the laws which have guided humanity for three thousand years. His personal disinterestedness was that which proceeds from a life fixed upon the interests of mankind and Jehovah. His patience was no unthinking, nerveless consent to the slow progress of dumb and blind events: it was the peace of power counting on a force which made every event the manifestation of God and all Hebrew history his revelation. In him were blended the poetical and the practical; indeed, in his life, so did the poetical and practical relate themselves in duty, that the dreamer was always lifting the doer to his vision and the doer was always receiving the dreamer's vision into his work.

“ And now beneath the sky the watchers all,
 Angels that keep the homes of Israel,
 Or on high purpose wander o'er the world
 Leading the gentiles, felt a dark eclipse:
 The greatest ruler among men was gone.
 And from the westward sea was heard a wail,
 A dirge as from the isles of Javanim,
 Crying, ‘Who now is left upon the earth
 Like him to teach the right and smite the wrong?’
 And from the East, far o'er the Syrian waste,
 Came slower, sadlier, the answering dirge:
 ‘No prophet like him lives or shall arise
 In Israel or the world forevermore.’

“ But Israel waited, looking toward the mount,
 Till with the deepening eve the elders came
 Saying, ‘His burial is hid with God.
 We stood far off and saw the angels lift
 His corpse aloft until they seemed a star
 That burnt itself away within the sky.’

“ The people answered with mute orphaned gaze,
 Looking for what had vanished evermore.
 Then through the gloom without them and within
 The spirit's shaping light, mysterious speech,
 Invisible Will wrought clear in sculptured sound,
 The thought-begotten daughter of the voice,
 Thrilled on their listening sense: ‘He has no tomb,
 He dwells not with you dead, but lives as Law.’”

BOOK V.

FROM THE PATRIARCHAL TENT TO THE PRIESTLY TABERNACLE.

BY

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BOOK V.

FROM THE PATRIARCHAL TEXT TO THE PRIESTLY TABERNACLE.

CHAPTER I.

PRIMITIVE RELIGIONS.

THERE is a disposition in certain quarters, among a special class of so-called scientists and culturists, to ignore religion as being at best a superstition, and unworthy of serious consideration. This cavalier method of disposing of religion is one which really scientific and serious minds cannot accept. Religion will not down at the bidding of those who, like the fool, say in their hearts "there is no God."¹ It is true that religion cannot be weighed in a balance or measured by a foot rule. It cannot be discovered by the telescope, discerned with the microscope, analyzed in a retort, nor resolved by the use of solutions. But it does not follow, therefore, that because religion is not a matter for the investigation of material science, it does not exist as part and parcel of human history — the religious instinct being inseparable from the constitution of man.

We might just as well ignore man's consciousness as man's religion, for wherever there is consciousness there is found religion. We might as well ignore civilization as religion, for wherever there is a history of civilization open to our study and investigation, there we find religion. Nor is religion confined to the civilized races of mankind, for it is present as really among barbarous as among cultured peoples; but as the modern culturists deal more exclusively with the civilized nations of the past, we confine our remarks to that section of the human family in this inquiry.

The more deeply we look into this matter, with the abundant materials furnished for our study by the archæologist and the philologist, the more we discover that religion and civilization march together. This also we find to be true, that religion is not so much the outgrowth of civilization as that civilization and all mental culture are the outgrowth of religion. In fact, religion has been, as it still is, the great inspiration and formative motive underlying all civilization. Moreover, we find upon closer study that racial characteristics do not account for the differences in the underlying ideas of the various religious cults of the world. On the other hand, religious ideas most likely account for the characteristic differences in races and civilizations. Any examination, therefore, into the worships of primitive times, especially into the worship characterizing those who were from the earliest days the followers of the true God, ought to be preceded by some inquiry into the nature of the cults that differentiated the apostate races from the chosen people of God. Attention is, therefore, invited to the question of religion as it existed and was developed in the families of the three sons of Noah, who practically divided the world between them, after the dispersion following the confusion of tongues at Babel.² It is fairly admitted by all scholars that the tenth chapter of Genesis gives us the best clue to the origin of the three great divisions of the human family among whom

¹ Psalm xiv, 1.

² Genesis ix, 19, x, 32, xi, 8, 9.

religion has been most perfectly developed. The families of Shem, Ham, and Japheth were the progenitors of the races with which we have most to do, and whose monuments and histories are coming more and more under our easy inspection. It is true that Genesis does not give us any account of the Chinese, Negroes, or the North and South American Indians. But we are not to suppose that that wonderful chapter was intended to give us a complete scientific account of the whole human family for the purpose of a purely scientific, ethnological, and genealogical study; but that the intention was to treat only of those families in which the main current of history is found, and for the purpose of comparison with reference to the development of the religion of the true God. It does teach us, however, that the whole human race was of one blood and one speech.¹ No doubt the Mongolian, the Negro, the American Indian, and some other peoples were the collateral offspring of the sons of Noah. But as the chosen people of God did not come in contact with them in the course of their religious development, they are left out of the tables as having no immediate relevancy to the matter in hand; just as the people of the land of Nod² are not genealogically traced in the records preserved to us, though it is intimated that they, also, were descendants of Adam who had wandered away to the east of Eden. In the final outworking of the purpose of God, however, these most distant and far-lost tribes of men are included in the covenant promise given to Abraham.³ Indeed, now that the western sons of Japheth—the Indo-Germanic peoples—have largely returned to the tents of Shem,⁴ they are becoming the great instruments in the hands of God for carrying the covenant promise of salvation back to the original and main stock of that family—the Indo-Hindus—as also to those far-dispersed families,⁵ the Mongolians, the Negroes, the American Indians, and other scattered races, who are also being gathered in by the same agencies.

Instead of dividing the human race, for the purpose of this study, into two main streams as we are in the habit of doing with respect to the true people of God and the heathen nations, we should bear in mind rather that the race parted into three main streams—the Shemites, the Hamites, and the Japhethites. We, therefore, find three distinct types of religious development set forth to us, not only in the Bible account, but in that furnished by the historical monuments and ancient libraries now being so wonderfully opened up by the indomitable patience and labor of the archæologist and philologist.

In tracing these three families we discover geographical, linguistic, civilizing, moral, and religious tendencies which characterize them severally. It will be of interest and profit to take up each of these branches in turn and note some of their chief characteristics, especially as to their religious and moral developments. It is only by so doing that we can arrive at a clear idea of what is involved in the worship which characterized the people of God in the most primitive times, and thus fairly contrast it with the false religions with which they were surrounded and had to contend. In this way we shall perceive, in some measure, how the same conflict between the true and false in religion, morals, and civilization is still present and progressing in our own day and generation. It requires but little investigation to follow the descendants of Ham into the southern belt of country where they developed their religion and civilization, namely, chiefly in Egypt, on the plains about Babylon and Nineveh, in Canaan, and on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean among the Phœnicians. The descendants of Japheth went northward and thence spread away toward the west over Eastern Europe, downward toward and past the Black Sea, over the Isles of Greece, and thence to Italy and northward over Germany, France, and the British Isles, even as far north as Sweden and Norway. In other words, the sons of Japheth constitute the great Indo-Germanic races of the North. The Shemites occupied a middle ground, and were for the most part confined to the peninsula of Arabia, Mesopotamia, and northward until they reached the borders of Japheth.

¹ Genesis iii, 20, ix, 19, xi, 1; compare with Acts xvii, 26, 27.

⁴ Genesis ix, 27.

⁵ In Genesis unnamed.

² Genesis iv, 16.

³ Genesis xii, 2, 3.



HILL OF THE CANAANITES.

It will be seen from this that for practical purposes we might draw three belts of color across the map of Central and Western Asia, Northern Africa and Europe, and locate the descendants of these three sons of Noah respectively in the Northern, Middle, and Southern zones.¹

Thus, the family of Ham were the ancient Egyptians, Babylonians, Canaanites, and Phœnicians; the family of Japheth, as we have seen, were the Indo-Germanic people, or the old and Western Aryans; the family of Shem, the Arabs proper, and later that remarkable people called out from them into separation unto Jehovah, the family of Abraham — the Hebrews, or Israelites.

The Hamites were the most advanced in civilization, the most aggressive and dominating of the three families. The Japhethites were the most numerous, migratory, and intellectually versatile. The Shemites were fewest in numbers, the most conservative, stationary and least progressive, being, in fact, almost surrounded and inclosed by their more powerful neighbors, particularly by the descendants of Ham, by whom, indeed, they were dominated in everything except religious ideas, and in this respect they only escaped extinction.

We shall take a very brief glance at the religious characteristics of these three families, and note some of their other peculiarities.

CHAPTER II.

THE THREE RELIGIONS.

AS has already been intimated, the chief settlement and seat of the Hamite family and power was in Egypt, whence they evidently recrossed the eastern peninsula of Arabia very early in their history. The vast material remains of that great civilization, especially the more recent discoveries, together with the writings of the ancients so lately brought to light, enable us to get a very fair and clear idea of the Hamite religion, which is easily identified with the other branches of the family, namely, the Assyrian, the Phœnician, and the Canaanite. It is to Egypt, however, that we first go to study their peculiarities. We cannot, of course, in this limited survey go very deeply into detail, but can only sketch an outline of these important matters, so as to enable us to get clearly before us the difference between their religion and that of the chosen people.

That the Egyptians were originally monotheists seems pretty evident. Among other reasons for this conclusion I mention the fact of their god Ammon (which is said etymologically to mean the "concealed god") being their chief deity. The idea of Ammon was that of a recondite, incomprehensible divinity, remote from man, hidden, mysterious, "the proper object of profoundest reverence." Ammon was undoubtedly just the fading shadow of the true God, the tradition of whom was dying out among those apostate people. They could not comprehend him, neither could they dismiss him from their minds. They, therefore, built no temple for him, but associated him with their god Ra (or the Sun-god) calling him Ammon-Ra. From this god Ra (or the sun) the Egyptians developed their polytheistic system, with all its ramification of doctrine and cult. It is not our purpose to follow them through this labyrinth of gods, but simply to trace the principal doctrine of their religion, which is essentially a materialistic nature-worship. All the deities of the Egyptians were simply different manifestations of the great god Ra—that is, each, in his or her place, stood for some principle or attribute of material nature. As, for instance, Osiris represented the light of the lower world or the sun

¹ See chapter ii.

from the time of its sinking in the west until its rising again. The Egyptians conceived that from Ra all visible and invisible powers of nature proceeded or were developed. The essential idea in their doctrine of creation, and hence in all the development of their religious ideas, was based on the generative and conceptive principles of nature. For our purpose we may set aside all the other gods, save only Osiris and Isis, who, under one name or another, were the chief objects of worship among these Hamites. These two reappear among the Babylonians, Phœnicians, and Canaanites, as Bel or Baal, and Ashtoreth or Astarte, standing for the male and female principles in nature, from which all things have been produced. The great prominence given to this doctrine accounts for all the abominations connected with the worship of these gods and against which the prophets of the Lord so bitterly inveighed. It was the introduction of this licentious and degrading worship among the children of Israel, chiefly by Jezebel the wife of Ahab and the daughter of the high priest of the Zidonian Bel, which brought on the fearful conflict between Elijah and Ahab, and led to the overthrow, captivity, and final dispersion among the nations of the ten tribes, to be gathered no more. At a later period the Greeks borrowed these gods and accepted their doctrines, though at the first their worship was neither gross nor sensual. The worship of the generative and conceptive principle in nature the Indo-Hindus also borrowed from the Hamites. This cult was that which led to the grossest corruptions found in all the false religions, leading ultimately to the downfall of their national life and the destruction of their civilization. It was especially this Isis worship which finally corrupted and brought to the dust the splendid civilization and once beautiful and poetic religion of the Greeks. It is this same sensual worship which has degraded the otherwise comparatively pure religion of the ancient Aryans who settled in India. The trailing mark of this loathsome pair, Osiris and Isis — Baal and Astarte — is now over all the land of India, has invaded every temple and household, and utterly corrupted and debased the entire Hindu cult.

But, leaving this disgusting feature of the religion of the Hamites, let us turn to another phase of the Egyptian conception of God. Both Osiris and Isis were the children of Ra; and ultimately Isis became the wife, as well as the sister, of Osiris. No wonder religion falls when such a relation is true of the gods. It was early conceived that all life proceeded from the sun; therefore he was deified. It was also observed that all products came from the soil; therefore the soil was deified. Now, the sun is Osiris, and the soil is Isis, though as the consort of Osiris she is the moon. Osiris is incarnated in the river Nile, which, as the father of all the productiveness of Egypt, of course, was a chief object of worship among the people. Isis or the moon was incarnated in the fertile soil of Egypt and hence was worshiped as the mother of good things. The Nile overflowing the soil of Egypt became the generative principle, and the earth or soil the conceptive principle, from which conjointly all the fruits of the earth sprang forth to sustain and bless the life of man. This principle was carried into everything that had life. Later on the chief god Ra became incarnate in certain animals, especially in the bull — Apis — and then in all living creatures: and so they all became objects of worship. Indeed, all nature, whether animate or inanimate, finally became but an incarnation of god, and the ultimate philosophical cult of the Egyptians was that of gross materialistic pantheism — the father and mother of our present day agnosticism and atheistic materialism. Gradually, from worshiping life in animals (for which the bull and cow stood forth as chief representatives), it became apparent that human life was a higher manifestation of god than a mere animal life. But as it was not possible to descend by a leap to self-worship, and not consistent with the dignity of the higher classes to pay worship to the hordes of poor downtrodden slaves, nor to their captives in war, the worship of the Egyptians was gradually restricted to the ruling classes, and finally centered in the supreme ruler or the Pharaoh who became, later, to all intents and purposes the only god the Egyptians had. The same was true in the great Mesopotamian kingdoms, and afterward became true among the Romans, who gradually adopted the religion of Egypt. The worship of

the Cæsars was the last downward step in the apostasy of classic Rome, and immediately preceded its utter downfall. In this king-worship we find the culmination of human apostasy from the true God. It was this tendency to "king-worship" which was the ground upon which God forbade the children of Israel to have a king, like the nations around them. So, when they insisted on having a king as had Babylon and Egypt, "God first gave them a king in his anger and then took him away in his wrath."¹ We can thus understand the meaning of God's word to Samuel on the occasion of the demand of Israel for a king: "And the Lord said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee [their judge and captain], but they have rejected me [their God and only king], that I should not reign over them."² What untold misery has come upon the human race from this Hamite principle of caste and the deification of mere earthly rulers; and yet even in Christian lands this worship of kings and high-caste men, though gradually dying out, continues with us until this day!

The Egyptians believed that god was the author of evil as well as of good, on the same principle that the sun in his rising made the light, and in his setting brought on the darkness. They, therefore, worshiped the rising and the setting sun under different names. And as all things were generated from god, why, then, evil as well as good was a part of god's creation and a part of himself. Hence, a great multitude of evil deities, but all representing god. Again, they sought to account for the chief tragedy of human existence—death. They early observed that the sun, which caused all life to spring out of the earth, also passed over it in the dry season and burnt all vegetation to death. The glorious Nile, the incarnation of the father of gods and of nature, the life-giving god, gradually lost itself in the sea. The Nile died away into the Mediterranean. The fruits died off the earth. Man died, and was no more. Therefore, there must be a god to represent this phase of nature, and that god was Typhon. The corresponding god among the Mesopotamian kingdoms was Adar Malik, or "King Adar," or, again, as in the Scriptures, "Adrammelech."³ Among the Canaanites this awful god is known and familiar to us under the name Moloch, a variation of Malik.⁴ The dreadful and abominable rite which chiefly characterized the worship of this god was the offering up of little children to him by casting them alive into the fiery furnace which burned in the midst of the hideous idol. This god also appears in the Tarsus Hercules, in the Indian "Siva, the destroyer," and in the popular Indian goddess, Kali. But in connection with death in nature there was observed the perpetual coming to life again, as in the fertile soil the field which burned to death by the sun in the dry season, revived again by the overflowing of the Nile. The Nile that ran out and lost itself in the Mediterranean came to life again by the rising of the vapors from the sea, which, returning in rain and snow, fed the sources of the Nile and in turn brought again its life-giving waters to the thirsty land. The fabled Phoenix, which burned itself to death and then revived again out of its own ashes, is a symbol of this principle of death and life in the gods. Strange that the gods of a people should be forever dying and coming to life again!

These, then, are the chief points of the religious cult of the Hamite family. Resolved into more simple language, we should say that it was the worship of material nature. A gross and grotesque pantheism in connection with a monistic polytheism—that is, the worship of one god under many forms and images, each one of the various gods having all the attributes of the others, the sum of all being the essence of the one god whom they could not abstractly grasp and who was too remote and dreamy for them to approach.

The Japhethites, as already noted, are the great Indo-Germanic people, of whom we are the descendants. This family went originally to the far north. We have comparatively few

¹ Hosea xiii, 11. ² I. Samuel viii, 7. ³ II. Kings xvii, 31. ⁴ Leviticus xviii, 21, xx, 2; I. Kings xi, 7; II. Kings xxiii, 10; Jeremiah xxxii, 35; Amos v, 26; compare with Acts vii, 43.

historical records or monuments of their early religion — that is, of the religious ideas developed by them after having been broken off from their brethren at the time of the dispersion from Babel. Yet we are not altogether without traditional knowledge of their cult, as it is preserved to us in the noble Sanskrit records—the Vedas. The Japhethites seem to have been a superior race of people, versatile, idealistic, poetic, and simple-minded. They increased with great rapidity, and according to their genius began early to emigrate and spread themselves abroad over the face of the earth northward and westward. The early tradition of their religion is preserved by that branch of the family which passed down from Northern and Central Asia through the Khyber pass into the Punjab about the time Abraham was called out from the land of Ur of the Chaldees. They were a fair-faced people originally, and of a roaming and restless disposition. The flower of this race is seen in the settlers of Greece, where a later development of their religious idea is noted. Among the German and Northern peoples is seen the heroic qualities of their family. Of their early religious idea—for, like the Hamites, they seem in their dispersion to have lost the traditional revelation of God as handed down to them by Noah—the Vedas give us some account. Their chief and supreme god was Varuna or the god of light. They did not associate this supreme being with the sun, or even directly with the sunlight, but he was that original light that streams from behind all things and fills all the creation with its glory. The sun may have been thought of in later times as the burning eye of the Light-god, just as the rushing wind, roaring over their mountains, sighing through the trees, or gently fanning the cheek, was his breath. They were essentially a poetic people. All their worship and thought about God was light, airy, imaginative, poetic. Associated with Varuna were a number of minor deities or attendants, which were in effect only names for the attributes and characteristics of the Light-god, Varuna. They were not idolaters, and had no temples. They worshiped not the light of the sun, the moon, or the stars, but that primitive light which was before and different from either of these. This conception seems to have been a lingering remembrance of the earliest revelation contained in Genesis.¹

By and by, according to a very natural tendency of the human mind and heart when it loses touch with the true God, materialistic ideas began to manifest themselves among the old Aryans, and they thought of earthly fire as the most fitting symbol of Varuna—Agni. Yet it was not the material fire that they thought so much of as it was the glow of the fire, the warmth of it, its beneficent powers exerted in cookery, etc. The Aryans were never properly materialistic, but rather always idealistic and poetic. To fire—Agni—they presently added another earthly symbol of the “Intelligent Friend and Benefactor of Man,” namely, Soma, a mildly intoxicating drink, distilled from the soma plant. Now, as it was not fire, but Agni, the spirit of fire, that was worshiped, so it was not Soma the intoxicant, but rather that mysterious something which exhilarated and made them “happy.” The early Aryans, as we have said, were not idolaters; they had, at first, neither priest nor temple. Their worship was domestic and private. Theirs was the poetic habit of dreaming about the mysterious powers of nature as being the sign of the presence of Varuna, who made the universe; who sighed in the winds; who burned in the sun by day and glowed in the planets by night; who caused the rain to fall and the rivers to rush along; whose garments were visible in the shadows as they flitted hither and yonder. They not only thought more of the invisible forces than of visible phenomena, but they soon began, like true poets as they were, to attribute moral characteristics to these forces. Then they began to give them names, and these names, being of both the masculine and the feminine order, began to suggest the characteristics of the masculine and feminine in the gods. With them, however, it was never sex, but the other characteristics such as strength and gentleness. The old Aryans were entirely free from the grossly sensual ideas of the Hamites. It is true that, in later times, after their descent into India, they soon came into contact with the

¹ Genesis i, 3.

Egyptian and Mesopotamian Hamites, from whom they borrowed their ideas of caste, the grosser ideas of sexuality in the gods, and, indeed, all the debasing features which have entered into the originally pure and beautiful nature-worship of our Japhethic fathers' religion.

There are very distinct traces of high moral teaching among these primitive Aryans. Truth, purity, and hospitality, were virtues inculcated. There are evidences of a deep sense of personal sin and transgression which led them to seek Varuna for mercy. Later, we find various ideas of sacrifice, offered to Varuna through Agni, or the hearth fire, or a fire built out in front of the house. Sometimes it was the fruit of the field, the fruit of the cow; sometimes it was life, as the goat, the buffalo, and finally the horse. Where they got their idea of mediation through sacrifice is not clear, beyond many concealed suggestions that it must have been the remaining memory of a yet more primitive revelation. A close study even of the grossest forms of later Hinduism shows many a trace of the primitive revelation and history, of which we have not space to write more fully. A study of the characteristics of the primitive worship of our Aryan fathers can but leave on our minds a feeling of its original simplicity and beauty, nor can we help believing that there were many worshipers of the true God, though they knew him not—children worshiping in the dark, feeling after God, if haply they might find him; and who shall say that many did not find him, who is ever seeking such to worship him—that is, truly spiritual men?

Passing from the older branch of the Aryan family, or the Japhethites, we see in their Greek descendants all the beautiful and splendid characteristics of the family genius breaking forth into most perfect flower. In Zeus we have the great god of light and the father of all the gods. In their idealism and poetry we see all the characteristics of their fathers. The religion of the Greeks was essentially a worship of the unseen forces of nature—not of its phenomena. Originally there was no grossness in it; much less was there any of the coarse materialism of the Egyptians. To them, god was not in the visible phenomena, but in the mysterious and eternal invisible powers lying behind all of phenomena. We must look for their religion as it is embodied chiefly in the glorious sculptures in which the people recognized their gods—not the material marble, but the form into which it had been sculptured—Beauty, Grace and Strength, and in the beautiful myths in which these characteristics are set forth; in their poetry, tragic and otherwise, in which the ideal and not the material is seen and recognized. Like their Aryan ancestors, it is always the invisible, and mysterious, and beautiful that they see and worship. Not the water of the rushing torrent, but the force and motion of it. Not the water of the murmuring brook, but the gentleness of its motion, and the music which it makes rippling over its pebbly bed. Not the light of the morning, but the dawn of the day. Not the night, but the mystery of the creeping shadows. Not the wind or the zephyr, but the noise of the wind and the whisper and kiss of the zephyr. Even after the Egyptians and the Phœnicians had made a great impact upon these Aryan Greeks, who borrowed from them their Hamite gods, it was not the grosser conceptions. For instance, in Aphrodite, we scarcely, at the beginning, see anything of Isis, or the sexual idea of womanhood and the conceptive principle of nature, but only the grace and beauty of the female form and the gentleness and charm of the female character.

The same characteristics—I mean the ideal and poetical—may be seen in the sterner conceptions of the German and Norseman. Originally, it was never with them the materialistic and gross, but the idealistic and the poetic. With them the powers of nature rather than nature are worshiped, and all these idealized and set forth in most charming myths, legends, and fairy stories. The nymphs of the woods and waters, of the darkness and the shadows, and all the delightful fairy stories these poetic people gave birth to and incorporated with their religion. It is true, there are some awfully stern and terrible aspects of god in Thor and Woden, but none of the gross and bestial traits of the gods of Egypt and Babylon, of Phœnicia and Canaan.

The Greeks were finally corrupted, first in their religious ideas by contact with Egypt and Phœnicia, and later on in morals and life, and so fell from their high estate into the mire and filth of Hamitism. Even so did Israel fall from her high estate into the arms of Baal and Astarte. The Greek god Zeus is, undoubtedly, of Aryan or primitive Indo-Germanic origin, but later corruptions, borrowed from the Egyptians, degraded this immortal god to a human or mortal being, subject to birth and death—a mere nature-god. This remark is also true of others of the Greek deities of the first rank.

Considering the whole Greek conception of religion and worship, we find that in primitive times it was not only infinitely purer and higher than the Egyptian, but that it carried with it all the characteristics of the genius of the Aryan family. Idealism, poetry, art, intellectuality of the higher sort, and even spirituality. We may say that the fundamental religious ideas of the Greeks found expression in their art, their poetry, their philosophy, their love of the true, the beautiful, and the good; but their evil communications with the Egyptians and the Phœnicians corrupted their morals as well as their civilization, and ultimately led to their downfall. Considered from their own point of view, we see all the proper characteristics of the Indo-European religion. A most careful student of this matter remarks of the Greek: He “is a most decided idealist, in direct contrast to the blank materialism of more recent times [the result of Egyptian ideas early communicated through contact with their religious conception of the gods]. “In mountain, grotto, river, waves, and the like, the material part interests him not at all; in his sight it entirely fades away. What does concern him, what interests and affects him, is the grace, the clearness, and the movement of the fountain, the unchanging might of the river, the shady darkness of the grove, the luxuriant moisture of the meadow, the play of color on the waves of the ocean—in short, it is these, and other similar spiritual qualities, as it were, which react upon his soul. These he does not regard as qualities belonging to the body, but he feels them to be manifestations of life, forms of divine activity; and these divine energies at once become to him divine figures and divine persons. In Helios, the Greek did not worship the sun, but the god who causes the sun to rise and bestows upon men the benefits of light. In Zeus he did not worship the heavens, but the high, ethical, divine personality that gained by lot the heavens in ether and clouds. Among the Greeks, in the bloom of Indo-European mythology, there was preserved, and at the same time developed in a peculiar manner, precisely that ideal and ethical character which we ascribe to the Indo-European genius in general.”

It is a pleasure to turn from this review of the religion of the Hamites and Japhethites, in the former of which families all is so gross and bestial, and in the latter all so vague and unreal, though to a certain extent pure and ennobling, to consider the fundamental idea of the Shemites, from whom sprang the Hebrew nation, and to whom, in an especial manner, pertained the covenants and promises of God. The Shemites, as we have seen, were mainly settled in Upper Arabia and Mesopotamia. They were almost entirely dominated by the Hamites, as far as their civilization and material condition were concerned; but there is every reason to believe that they kept and maintained in comparative purity their traditional religious and moral life. At least there is no evidence that they were idolaters or polytheists, except when apostatized to the Hamites. For a record of the religious cult of this family of the human race, we must depend almost exclusively upon the Bible, the most ancient and authentic record of primitive times. The name Shem is significant, as, indeed, are also the names of Ham and Japheth. Ham, meaning “hot,” and probably pointing to human passions which so largely characterized the religion of his descendants. Japheth, meaning “enlargement,” points to that vast Indo-European population which sprang from him, coupled with the activity of temperament which was so characteristic of his family. Shem signifies “name,” and probably points to that “Name” above all names, which from the first was the object of his contemplation.

The Hamites were dwellers in cities and great and mighty builders, and were devoted to the arts and sciences. They were great astronomers and mathematicians. They cultivated the soil and increased its productiveness. The Japhethites, originally nomadic, became travelers, soldiers, artists and poets, philosophers and civilizers, rather as culturists than materialists. We need only to contrast the architecture of the Egyptians with that of the Greeks to see the vast and essential difference between the civilization developed by the one religious idea and that of the other. The one is earthly and heavy; the other is heavenly and light. The one is from beneath, the other from above. The Shemites were never city builders. They were not even agriculturists. They were nomadic—shepherds and herdsmen—perhaps in some cases merchants, traveling from one part of the world to another. They lived in tents, not in houses—in the open fields, and not in towns and cities. Their temple was the open heavens—their god was an invisible NAME, whom they adored and worshiped in spirit, without even an attempt to embody or identify him with any visible phenomena. He was the creator, but never the creature. He was over all, above all, and blessed. The three cults were as follows: Hamites, materialists; Japhethites, idealists; Shemites, spiritualists. Their religious ideas were derived, probably, as follows: Hamites, from observation—material science; Japhethites, from speculation—philosophical culture; Shemites, from inspiration—revelation.

CHAPTER III.

WORSHIP IN PRIMITIVE TIMES.

THERE can be hardly a doubt that the first and happy pair whom God created and placed in the Garden of Eden worshiped him there for the brief period of their primeval innocence; though no specific account is given us. That they knew the “voice of the Lord” and that he was in the habit of “walking with them in the Garden in the cool of the day, and talking with them,”¹ we most assuredly gather from the Scriptures. How God appeared to them we do not know, but most likely as he did in later times in some form as of the “Angel of the Lord,” of whose first appearance we read in Genesis xvi, where he came and spoke words of comfort and cheer to poor, outcast Hagar.² All such appearances were but the foreshadowings of the final incarnation of God among men in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What the manner of this primeval worship was, we have no means of knowing; but it was, most likely, adoration and the sweet communion of simplicity; for sin had not yet entered in, and there was no need of sacrifice or any kind of propitiation, no confession of sin, and probably not even prayer, for the Lord God was ever present. But after sin entered in, and man had awakened to the full consciousness of his moral nature and all its terrible responsibilities, there came in a new form of worship. In his abounding mercy God did not cut man off on account of his sin, but proceeded at once to reclaim him. In this act of grace we have the first glimpse of the inauguration of sacrifice as a means of approach to God, and as underlying all subsequent worship. To the guilty pair, God spoke words of hope and encouragement, taking their part against the serpent who beguiled them, and promising that in due time there should arise from among their descendants one who should bruise the head of the serpent³ and so deliver them, and bring them back to God in reconciliation and peace. At this time we are told that God made them “coats of skins, and clothed them.”⁴ Up to this time death had

¹ Genesis iii, 8, 9.

² See Genesis xviii, 1, 2, 13, 17-21; Joshua v, 13-15; Judges xiii, 3, 18.

³ Genesis iii, 15.

⁴ Genesis iii, 21.

not entered into the world. But, in order to clothe the sinful pair with coats of skin, some animal or animals had to be slain and from them the skins were taken. There can be no doubt that the animals thus slain were used in sacrifice, and their skins taken for clothing—not only in the physical sense, but also in a deeper spiritual and moral sense. The sacrifice thus offered was undoubtedly the first great type of the sacrifice of Christ, that “seed of the woman,” before promised, and the skin-clothing representing that righteousness of Christ which is still our only covering. Isaiah beautifully sings of this divine clothing, in connection with the great promise of the coming Messiah: “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.”¹ Later on in the story of man, in his relation to God, as a religious being, we find Cain and Abel approaching God to worship him, each with an offering. Cain bringing his offering from the fruits of the earth, while Abel brought his sacrifice from the flock.² Of these two offerings and offerers, one was accepted and the other rejected. Abel’s offering was accepted because it was offered in faith³—that is, in obedience to directions which God had given, and in confidence that he would be accepted through his obedience or faith in the matter of the offering. That there was at least, on Abel’s part, confession of sin, praise, and prayer we must assume from what we know of the nature of worship, as developed later on, all which had connection with these earliest acts of faith and worship. We know, further, that about this time there occurred a schism in the human family, the one part worshiping God according to the rule of faith, the other part apostatizing from God according to the unbelief and pride of Cain. In the days of the third son of Adam (that is, the third whose genealogy is given) we read: “Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord,” or more literally, “to call themselves by the name of the Lord.”⁴ This reminds us of what is said of the early disciples of Christ: “And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”⁵ At that time, when men first began to call themselves by the name of the Lord, they certainly, also, with this confession of faith called upon his name in confession and prayer, and no doubt in adoration and praise. At any rate, there was evidently a very definite habit of worship, in which apparently the worshipers acknowledged their sins, and cast themselves upon God for his mercy. This worship continued in a lessening number of people during the antediluvian period until apparently very few were left. Among these were Enoch “who walked with God,”⁶ and obtained “this witness that he pleased God.”⁷ Noah also walked with God, having “found grace with him.”⁸ All this implies worship—that is, communication with God in respect of man’s needs, moral and spiritual. And this is true worship! That Noah was familiar with, and habituated to, sacrificial worship is plain from the fact that the first thing he did after coming out of the ark with his household was to build an altar unto the Lord, and “took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.”⁹ Surely, it is impossible not to conclude that such acts of worship were even continued during the time of their imprisonment in the ark. At least, if the sacrifices were not continued while in the ark, worship was. That Noah called upon the name of the Lord, and ordered what we would call “family worship” with his household day by day, we cannot but think.

After the great spiritual rebellion in the family of Ham, which culminated in the building of the tower of Babel, the confusion of tongues by the Lord, and the subsequent scattering of the people, there seems to have been a great general apostasy. The Japhethites seem to have migrated toward the north, the Hamites westward and southward, settling in Egypt; while the Shemites took to the plains of Mesopotamia and Upper Arabia. In course of time, the Hamites largely flowed back upon the Shemites, and the two families became to a certain extent mixed,

¹ Isaiah lxi, 10; compare Philippians iii, 8, 9; Revelation xix, 8.

² Genesis iv, 4, 5.

³ Hebrews xi, 4.

⁴ Genesis iv, 26.

⁵ Acts xi, 26.

⁶ Genesis v, 22.

⁷ Hebrews xi, 5.

⁸ Genesis vi, 8, 9.

⁹ Genesis viii, 20, 21.

the Hamites largely dominating the children of Shem. In the opening chapter of this book, we have already seen in detail something of this race movement. The Shemites were much corrupted by the gross idolatry of the Hamites, which they gradually adopted, together with their civilization; so that we see that even Terah, the father of Abraham, had become an idolater. How long an interval of time had elapsed between the overthrow of the conspiracy at Babel and the call of Abraham, we have no certain means of knowing. It must have been a much longer period of time than we are wont to think from the simple and fragmentary character of Bible history, which does not pretend to give us complete history, but only so much of it as is necessary for the purpose of setting forth God's revelation to us. In any case, we are safe in saying, that, though Ham and his descendants had completely apostatized from God and given themselves up to gross and carnal "nature-worship," and Japheth and his descendants (though at the time of Abraham they had not yet fallen into the materialism and bestiality of Ham) had, in a large measure, lost the earlier and more spiritual tradition of God, and had begun only through a very fine and poetic idealism to seek God, "if haply they might feel after him, and find him" again, there were those in the family of Shem who had preserved the tradition of God as he was known before the flood, and by their father, the son of Noah. These few, no doubt, preserved a true and spiritual worship of God, holding to the unity and spirituality of his being, and worshiping him as the Creator of the world and the Preserver of men; as the One against whom sin is committed, and from whom forgiveness must come. There is reason to believe, from the most recent discoveries, that in the great and splendid city of Ur of the Chaldees, from whence Abraham came, though wholly given over to the Hamite worship, traditions of the creation, the flood, the confusion of tongues at Babel were still retained, and especially is it noteworthy that at least one ordinance of God was somehow preserved and still held sacred out of the ruin of revelation, namely, the sanctification of the Sabbath day. "Other sacred usages, originally of divine origin, but sadly corrupted in Abraham's day, also survived. The summits of all the mighty towers and temples, with which the country abounded, had their altars, on which sacrifices were offered to their gods." Their gods, indeed, were mere creatures of their imagination or the powers of nature which they had personified; but their sacrifices were the corrupted and degenerated remains of a once pure and spiritual worship, offered to the true and only Jehovah. Whatever of pure and spiritual conception of God remained at this age of the world was preserved by the descendants of Shem. Abraham, reared amidst all these splendid and sensuous idolatries, seems to have been one who still retained in comparative, if not in absolute purity, a faith in one only and true God, and he refused to bow down to and worship the false gods of the heathen people around him. The traditions of Abraham's struggles with his idolatrous neighbors, and even of his conflict with his father, preserved by the Jews, are full of interest, but we have not the space to allow of their rehearsal. Abraham did preserve his soul in purity, as the lily does its beauty though resting in the pools of blackest water. Abraham was, perhaps, the last of his race to whom the knowledge of God remained in anything like purity and simplicity. It is probable, therefore, that God called him out from among the heathen of Ur, as he did Lot out of Sodom, that with him there might be a new beginning of worship in the knowledge of God. It is almost certain that the exodus of Abraham and his kindred was about contemporary with the founding of Babylon—in other words, just before the vast populations of these parts had slid down hopelessly into the utter darkness and degradation of the Hamitic worship.

We do not lose sight of the fact, however, that in the land toward which Abraham migrated, and in which he had an actual home, God still had his witnesses—or at least one witness. For in this land, and just after he had returned from the pursuit and victory over the confederate kings from whom he rescued his nephew, Lot, and other chief citizens of Sodom, and recovered all the spoil taken from the city, Abraham met with that strange and

mysterious personality, Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God.¹ In Melchizedek Abraham met with one who was even in advance of him in knowledge, and above him in spiritual relation. Here, also, we get a glimpse of some other external elements in primitive worship. The king of Salem brought forth bread and wine, which, without question, were used, as we say, eucharistically, or in any case spiritually; and here, also, we find Abraham giving to Melchizedek tithes of all he possessed. The account is very meager, but it helps us to understand something of the fundamentals of primitive worship. Who this Melchizedek was, it is difficult to say. Whether a solitary priest of God in those dark and apostate regions, or whether he was an early manifestation of our Lord Jesus, come down to meet with and instruct Abraham, who had been chosen as the progenitor of a new race of believing men, we do not know. I am inclined to think he was a supernatural being—even Jehovah himself—appearing to Abraham to teach him the way of life and godliness; and the more so that, up to this time, we have no suggestion of any priesthood among the Semitic people.

Before the time of meeting with Melchizedek, we find Abraham building altars at several places on his line of march and journeyings.² What was offered upon these altars we do not know, as no account is given. Doubtless, a lamb from the flock, as being in accordance with the early traditions; or, at most, some birds or beasts from among the “clean” creatures. That the offering was an act of worship, and was accompanied by words spoken by the worshiper there is no doubt; for we read that on Abraham’s return from Egypt, whither he had gone down on account of the famine, he returned to the place where he had first set up an altar, and “there he called on the name of the Lord.” It will be no stretch of the imagination to supply the simple service that took place at that altar where Abraham tarried on his way up out of Egypt. In the days of Seth, the third from Adam, we have seen that men “began to call upon the name of the Lord.” They must have had the very same warrant then that the psalmist had, centuries later, when he declared of the Lord that he “is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them.”³ We can fancy Abraham reverently drawing near to the altar on which he had placed his offering, either standing or kneeling, with face upturned toward heaven and saying: “O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord.”⁴

In this land of Canaan, where Abraham was sojourning, and where he subsequently remained after Isaac had been given to him, the Hamites, in their idolatrous worship, mingled the blood of their own children in the sacrifices to their false gods, especially to Moloch. Abraham was familiar with the rite of human sacrifice as practiced by the heathen, both in Canaan and in the city of Ur from whence he had been called out. Once and for all God tried his faith in this matter, and stayed his hand as it was uplifted to slay his son, and said unto him: “Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son.”⁵ This was God’s way of at once trying the faith of Abraham, and forever putting from him and his descendants the awful crime of human sacrifice, and at the same time, by the combined offering of Isaac and the final slaying of the ram, we have a prophecy of the coming great Sacrifice which Christ, through the eternal Spirit, made of himself, when he offered himself a sacrifice for sin to God. The sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, followed in the footsteps of their father in their manner of worship.

Before attempting any summary of the element which entered into the primitive worship of those who knew the true God, it is necessary that we include in our data the simple story of

¹ Genesis xiv, 18-20.² Genesis xii, 7, xiii, 4, 18.³ Psalm cxlv, 18, 19.⁴ Psalm cxvi, 16, 17.⁵ Genesis xxii, 10-13.

the worship practiced by the patriarch Job. We read that at that time, say about midway between Abraham and Moses, it was the custom of "the sons of God to present themselves before the Lord."¹ This may have been some solemn annual feast, at which all the pious people of the countryside gathered to worship. But what is more interesting still is the fact that Job himself was in the habit of connecting with his worship a solemn sacrifice for sin. It was the custom in those days and in that country to celebrate with feasting and mirth the birthdays of the children of a family. Job had a large family of seven sons and three daughters. On the recurring birthdays of these sons, they in turn would all assemble to celebrate them with eating and drinking wine. There is every reason to believe that these children of Job were piously brought up, and worshipful children. Job did not join them in their feasting, as either being too old, or as having no particular taste for such mirthfulness, though not unwilling that his children should have a happy and joyous time. He was not afraid of their going to any length of deliberate sinfulness, but he was afraid that, in the midst of their merriment, they might "curse God"—that is, forget or "renounce God"—by falling into that overconfidence of youth and under the power of the present. He, therefore, after the round of feasting was over, "sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually."² "No more lovely scene of simple faith and religious peace has ever been conceived than that which the historian discovers to us in these five verses." This lets us into two facts. That the sacrifices offered in these primitive times were in part expiatory in their nature, and were offered, not by a specially appointed priest but either by the individual worshiper on his own behalf, or by the father, as priest of his own household there. Religion with the Semites was not a national and state affair. It was no elaborate cult for priests and temples, with all the ritual of a priesthood attached, but a simple approach to God by the individual, or at most by a father in behalf of his family. This simplicity obtained among the early people of God until the time of the Exodus, when they were taken up out of Egypt and in the Wilderness organized into a nation with a national religion to be observed formally and continuously until the great Antitype—the Eternal Son of God—should come and take up into himself all these sensuous and visible ceremonials by fulfilling them.

We may now very well gather together in a few sentences what we have learned of the most primitive worship:

1. A belief in one only and true God whom they worshiped as the Creator and Preserver of men.
2. An acknowledgment of human sin and transgression, on account of which appeal for forgiveness must be made to God.
3. A belief that with God there was mercy and forgiveness for sinful men.
4. That in order to obtain the divine forgiveness, sin must be confessed and a sacrifice offered in the blood of some animal, by which the demerit of sin was expressed in the death of the sacrifice, and acceptance of the sacrifice acknowledged by the rising smoke from the altar.
5. That the worship of God also included the expression of glad thanksgiving to him for all the common mercies of life.
6. The character of God as holy and just, as the Overseer of his people, was clearly recognized; and that he was also a living Redeemer who would, in full time, take up and avenge our wrongs and vindicate his righteousness in his dealings with us.
7. That he is a being infinitely near to us, though also infinitely separated and apart from us; yet so cognizant of all our affairs, so tender and regardful of, so absolutely incapable of doing us any wrong or of allowing any wrong to be done to us that is permanent, that, "though

¹ Job i, 6.

² Job i, 5.



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he should seem to slay us, or in fact should do so, as far as this life is concerned, we may still trust him, and that without being able to understand or fathom his ways."

8. That two worlds are ours, one in which we now live and one into which we shall come after the life that now is has been lived out.

9. The very existence of God transcendent to us, and yet to whom we are bound as the subject of love and worship, is the absolute ground of our faith in a life to come. We, indeed, see this more clearly than did the early worshipers of God, yet they also did discern it and rejoiced in it. "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living;" and not of the present living inhabitants of this earth, but of those living ones who were once dead, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

CHAPTER IV.

THE STORY OF JOB.

BY common consent of all critics the Book of Job, if not the very oldest, is the finest poem in the world. Both Gibbon, the historian, and Carlyle, that master of criticism in literary matters, agree that in all the literature of the world there is no work with which it can be compared, its excellency in every direction is so preëminent. And yet it is a book that is not generally read, even by Bible readers; perhaps because the argument is sometimes difficult to follow; perhaps because few have come to understand that, though written in proverbial form, its argument is sustained with perfect continuity from beginning to end. It ought to be read through, if not at a single sitting, at least with a careful remembrance of what has gone before, if the reading is to be broken, or taken up at intervals.

That Job was a real person it seems to me there ought not to be any reasonable doubt. Like Abraham, he is altogether too human to be an invention, too much like ourselves, especially in his weaknesses, to be a myth. It would be difficult to understand how Ezekiel could have referred to him in connection with Noah and Daniel, two undoubted historical characters, if he had not been known as a historical personage; or how James could have referred to him as the greatest example of patience, if there had been any suspicion that he was a mere fiction.¹ Nevertheless, there are some able critics who maintain that the whole book—characters and all—is a purely fictitious work, designed to serve the purpose of teaching, much like our Lord's parables. But we must remember that the best canon for the settlement of all such questions is that one which assumes that the obvious impression which Scripture makes upon the common mind is the true one. If we should follow all the mazes of modern criticism as to the historical truth of the various books of the Bible, their genuineness, authenticity, dates, etc., we should be absolutely landed in confusion worse confounded in respect to almost every separate book in the Bible. I do not say that, should it be proved that this sublime book is a pure work of fiction, a parabolic drama worked out for the purpose of setting before us in this concrete way the most difficult problems of life, such a fact would in any way invalidate the book as a part of the teaching which God has given us for our learning and comfort, but only there is no proof that such is the case. The story itself may be either a literal history in all its details, or it may be a dramatized history, based on substantial facts, much as Shakspeare has dramatized the personal histories of some of the English kings. In either case, the story is equally valuable. I am inclined strongly to the opinion, after doing my best through many years of study, that the story is a true and literal one, preserved by

¹ Ezekiel xiv, 14; James v, 11.

the good providence of God and handed down to us from those long-ago centuries in which Job lived, first by oral tradition, and subsequently written by some unknown author whose genius was directed by the inspiring and guiding Spirit of God, much in the same way, as to mode, as the Homeric tales have been preserved to us, first by oral tradition, and later by some great poet who edited and then wrote them down. It is quite possible that, in editing the story of Job and his friends, the editor has taken a lawful literary license in the construction and movement of this great life drama.

Assuming, then, the reality of the characters set forth in the book, we are still left much in the dark as to the exact locality of Uz, the dwelling place of our great patriarch. The topographical references, as well as allusions, to the various natural phenomena throughout the poem cannot be taken as a certain guide. It is most likely that Job was an Arab prince, a Semite who never lost the knowledge of the true God, and who held fast by the primitive revelation handed down by Noah, not always without loss or additions, but in the main sufficiently pure to save those who heeded it from idolatry and polytheism. The whole book goes to show that not only Job, but his friends, had a most exalted and pure conception of God as the transcendent Creator and Moral Governor of the world, as well as the Preserver of men. The land of Uz, it would seem from many Scriptural references, was to the east of Palestine, and north of Edom, and bordering on the western confines of Chaldea. Job himself was no doubt a patriarch of that middle era to which Abraham belonged—certainly he lived long before Moses. The great longevity to which he attained—an hundred and forty years,¹—the mention of only one kind of money,² and the fact that only the three most ancient musical instruments are mentioned,³ all point to the fact that Job lived in a very early age after the dispersion of the three families of Noah from the plains of Babel. He lived, therefore, in an age long before Moses had written the law, or instituted the Hebrew worship. The absence of all reference to any former Scripture, to Jerusalem, to the Law, or to any ceremonial observance known to the Hebrews, is sufficient evidence of this fact. Moreover, there is in all Job's utterances a continual undertone and outcry for a revelation of God, which seems never to have been given, up to the time Jehovah spoke toward the close of the book. The piety and worship of Job was either the result of the highest type of natural religion—not nature-worship—or the result, as we have said, of a knowledge of God obtained from the primitive revelation handed down by Noah. The latter supposition is the more probable. In no other religion than that of the Semites do we find anything like such pure and exalted ideas of God. That Job knew something of the law of righteousness and the meaning of sacrifice, in connection with worship on account of sin, is another evidence of the comparative purity of his conception of God. The Noachian traditions must have been still comparatively fresh in Job's time; and if he lived contemporarily with, or immediately after, Abraham, it is not improbable that some of the knowledge vouchsafed to Abraham was imparted to Job and to those men who, like him—his three friends, and doubtless many others who lived in the same times—were the worshipers of the true God. The book in its present form was most probably written in the Solomonic age—that is, the history preserved for us in the book belonged to an age about sixteen centuries before Christ, whereas the poem itself was composed something like 700 or 800 years before the advent of our Lord.

To give a perfect analysis of the book—or rather, we should say, this sublime drama—would require more space than is at our disposal, though I regard it as one of the most important books in the Bible. Yet we must be content with the merest outline of this story of human suffering and struggle after God. Let it be first understood that there is in this book no mere philosophical conception of God. God is known either from an original revelation of

¹ Job xlii, 16. ² Job xlii, 11; compare Genesis xxxiii, 19.

³ Job xxi, 12, xxx, 31; compare Genesis iv, 21, xxxi, 27.

himself, or from a moral and spiritual apprehension of him through the religious nature. Job is essentially a religious, not simply a moral book. In it we find religion pure and simple—that is, it has to do with the relations existing between God and man, the human and the divine. It is a highly individualized statement of religion; for while there is an occasional reference to other persons, and even to man in general—indeed, “there is,” as Carlyle says, a “noble universality” about it—it has to do solely with the question of God’s dealings with this one man Job, as a man known to him and in whom he has the deepest interest. So, on the other hand, God was to him a God personally and individually related to him—his Daysman, his Kinsman, his Redeemer—upon whom he passionately laid a personal claim for help and deliverance out of his miseries, especially out of the miseries arising from the tormenting mental and spiritual problems which were rioting in his soul, while he was groping about in impenetrable darkness. The movement of the great religious inquiry is, indeed, from beneath upward—that is, Job starts from himself and his own misfortunes and seeks to reach upward to God. He is constantly interpreting God by his experiences, rather than interpreting his experiences by God. A more lofty phase of religion comes later on when God fully reveals himself to Job and comforts him with a fuller and diviner knowledge of the truth than he had before.

The book is divided into three parts: The Prologue, the Argument, and the Postlude. The first and the last are in prose, while the body of the book is in the most classic poetry—a poetry which the late Mr. Froude said “will one day be seen towering up alone, far above all the poetry of the world.” The argument is in three cycles, conducted between Job and his three friends, each friend appearing in each of the cycles except the last, in which one of them retires. In general, we may be content with saying that the argument turns on the relation of affliction to the sins of those afflicted, and on the use of suffering as an instrument for the sanctification and discipline of the righteous, without regard to any particular sin committed by the afflicted one, but rather with regard to the inherent sinfulness of the nature of man, and with reference to his future and higher standing and communion with God. It has been called the book of individual discipline for the learning of self. It has sometimes been allegorized and dealt with as a parable of man, as such, in relation to sin and God. An acute student of this school of interpreters gives us this point of view: (*a*) Job the righteous man (Adam) before his trial; (*b*) Job (Adam) under trial; (*c*) Job’s (Adam’s) fall or failure under trial; (*d*) the failure of Experience, Tradition, and Law, the three points of view of the three friends, taken in their argument with Job to humble Job (the natural man) and bring him to a confession of not only sin but sinfulness before God; (*e*) Job’s (man’s) self-righteousness; (*f*) Job (man) under revelation; (*g*) Job (man) under God’s direct and personal teaching; (*h*) Job (man) under conviction and thoroughly penitent; (*i*) Job (penitent man) forgiven; and (*j*) Job restored and glorified. This is suggestive but fanciful, and certainly detracts from the sublimer teachings of the book.

1. THE CRUX. The whole meaning of the Book of Job turns upon the historical incident set forth in the prologue. Here we find God pointing Job out to Satan (who had come up with the sons of God) as “a perfect and an upright man,” “one that feared God and eschewed evil.” To this eulogium of Job Satan made reply: “Doth Job serve God for naught?” That is, this “accuser of the brethren” at once denied the genuineness of Job’s piety, and grounded it in selfishness. He served God because it was profitable for him to do so. His piety was, Satan insinuated, of a purely commercial character. This insinuation God rejected and allowed Satan to put the matter to test. Then follows the terrible loss of property and of all Job’s children. A perfect hurricane of trouble this! Yet Job sinned not, but held fast his integrity; instead of being tempted by his afflictions to renounce God, he nobly bowed to the storm and answered, with his mantle rent and his face on the ground in an attitude of

worship: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."¹ Again Satan appeared before God, and the integrity of Job was pointed out, notwithstanding the terrible and unmerited afflictions which had been permitted to fall upon him. To this Satan made reply, turning even Job's piety into an account against him: "Skin for skin; yea all that a man hath will he give for his life." That is, Job is a selfish man, indifferent to the loss of children, caring only for himself. As long as he keeps his own skin whole and his life to himself he will do very well; "but put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone, and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face."² The Lord delivered him a second time into the hand of Satan to do his worst, short of taking his life, which would have been fatal to the trial. Satan did his worst, smiting him with boils from head to feet. The disease was probably the most loathsome form of leprosy known as elephantiasis. We read that it was a burning and wasting fever in his flesh, and that it struck in even to his bones. It banished him from his house and family, and drove him to one of the huge ashheaps common in oriental countries. There he became a byword and a reproach to everyone—even the little children mocked him. To his wife, who taunted him, he replied with sublime meekness: "What! Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?" "In all this did not Job sin with his lips." This, then, is the question to be tried to a conclusion: Is religion, where it really exists, a matter of selfishness, dependent upon any measure of profit or reward? When a soul is truly related to God, will the integrity of that relation stand in spite of all trials which the man may have to undergo? The service of God is not without reward, but it is not for reward. "Godliness is profitable for the life that now is and that which is to come," but truly religious men are not religious for the sake of the profit; they will gladly suffer the loss of all things and "count them but dung," if only they may win God and Christ and be found in him, not having their own righteousness but the righteousness, communion, and companionship of God.

The other great matter growing out of this trial of Job is one that naturally follows, namely, that true religion has its strength in that old and often repeated declaration: "The just shall live by faith." According to the accepted theology of Job and his friends, profitability was closely associated with piety. God was conceived of as holy and just, dealing with men solely on principles of retributive justice. The good would be rewarded with all manner of temporal blessings, and the wicked would be followed in this life with disaster and overthrow, so that righteousness and wickedness alike were rewarded and punished in this life. This was a "sight" theology; and it was on this basis that Satan framed his attack upon Job. It was the overthrow of this theology which brought Job into his deepest darkness, threw him into the most profound distress of mind, and tormented him most, leading him almost to blaspheme God and charge him with injustice in allowing such suffering to come upon him without any just cause for it. For in the madness of Job's bitter complaint, frantic with trouble, he charges God with injustice, not only toward him but toward man in general, if a righteous man, such as he confessedly should be and consciously was, was allowed to suffer as he was suffering, and especially if God took no notice of it, nor came to his relief. He also craves at the same time vindication from the false accusation under which he was compelled to lie by reason of the charges of his three friends. In fact, Job, in this time of mental disturbance and spiritual darkness, accuses God of injustice in two different ways; first, that he was unjust in his dealings with men, in respect of suffering, where there was no direct reason for it, as in his case—for he knew that he had committed no special iniquity and knew that his conscience was good in God's sight—and, secondly, that it was of no advantage for a man to be righteous, since evil followed the righteous even as the wicked man. In this he came near justifying Satan's taunt, that religious men served God for profit and not out of pure devotion. The remarkable thing is that in all this maelstrom of temptation, under these frightful trials and mental

¹ Job i, 20, 21.² Job ii, 5.

distress, Job never renounced God. Even when he charged him with injustice in a moment of passion, he fell at his feet in the next sentence, and cried out: "O not that, my God! I do not know, I do not understand! In any case, whatever be the truth, and however deep be the darkness; however sorely thou mayest afflict me, it seems as without a cause; yea, though thou slay me, yet will I trust thee."¹ This, then, is the answer to Satan. The true man serves God not with sight, or because it is profitable, and because he understands all his dealings with him, but because he believes God and trusts him, without profit, without present blessedness, without understanding. "The just shall live by faith."

2. **JOB'S TEMPTATIONS.** The temptations or trials of Job were, as above intimated, three-fold. (a) The sudden downcoming of the storm which swept away at one stroke all his wealth and robbed him of all his children. A greater calamity, at first thought, it would seem impossible for any man to suffer. Such a tornado of trouble coming, as it were, like a bolt out of a clear blue sky, was enough to lift the best of men off his feet. Looked at from the point of view of a man who, like Job, "feared God and eschewed evil," whose whole life was one continuous act of devotion, it is not surprising that even the astute Satan concluded that religion would not survive such a shock. It is never once intimated that Job ever thought that Satan had a hand in these calamities. His religious belief did not give to Satan such sovereign power as would make it possible for him to do such a thing without divine permission. Thus from the start Job attributed the stroke to God's own hand. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away." So neither could Job know nor understand that God was trying him under challenge, only that his gold might be refined and the true glory of religious faith and character be brought more clearly to light. Had he known what was (so to speak) going on behind the scenes, the trial might have been painful for the moment, but it would not have moved him, more especially could he have seen what God had in reserve for him as disclosed finally in the epilogue of the story. But it is not given to us to know all things, especially God's "whys and wherefores." It is the part and office of faith for us to trust God without knowing what his counsels are.

(b) Job's second trial was when Satan put forth his hand to afflict his body. How grievous this affliction was, we have already noted. Not only in itself, but coming upon the back of the other trial, it was worse than if it had stood alone. The first might have been an inscrutable providence that faith might, with comparative ease, have overcome as being exceptional. Then Job might have pointed to his spared family, his own health, and been comforted with the natural and kindly sympathy of his friends, while by his industry and wisdom he could have repaired his losses. But, coming as a second stroke, it seemed all too convincing that it was mysteriously from God and had in it some retributive meaning. Especially would this be the interpretation of Job's friends and neighbors. It was this, in fact, that turned against Job his neighbors, who had once been in the constant habit of honoring him—the young men and the old men, and especially the children and his many servants. Now they all look upon him as one whom God had forsaken and punished as for some unknown crime. This, indeed, was hard to bear. Even his wife refused to recognize him any longer; and he was left alone in his misery, scraping himself with a potsherd as he sat all day, and lay all night long, on the huge village ash heap, the refuse ground of all the community, bemoaning himself in the midst of this impenetrable affliction, the chiefest element in his grief being that he could not understand God. In fact, there is in this situation the undertone of that awful cry that, in after centuries, burst from the lips of the Son of God: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

(c) The third affliction and trial was the completion of the one that has just been described. From a distance there came three eminent, wise, and pious men, all of Job's own class and all his close friends. They had heard of Job's first great trial, but as it was merely a

¹ Job xiii, 15.

matter affecting his property and his own immediate family, they had refrained from intruding on his trouble. Later on, perhaps after the lapse of some months, or even a year, as is most probable, this second stroke, under which Job's body was so terribly afflicted, was reported to them. They then began to talk the matter over. They were truly sympathetic and deeply troubled. According to the accepted theology of that day, they at once concluded that these things were the judgment of God in retributive justice upon Job for some grievous sins—some dark and hidden hypocrisy it may be—and they set out to “comfort him”; while at the same time they would gratify their curiosity. Perhaps something worse prompted them to study the fall of this great and good man, whose fame was throughout all the land. It does not seem charitable to suppose that any other motive than that of sympathy brought them to “comfort” Job; yet it is not altogether contrary to human nature that there was in them some curiosity to see how Job took these things, and what he would say for himself, and how this greatest man among them all would bear himself under circumstances which had reduced him to poverty, stripped him of his children, branded his body with a loathsome disease, and driven him an outcast from his kind. A great philosopher has said that there is that vein of depravity in every man that causes a little secret satisfaction in the misfortunes of even one's best friend, especially if that friend be a little above us in rank and reputation. It is to be hoped that this is not universally true, yet it is to be feared that it is so far true that it behooves the best of men to guard themselves against the movement in their hearts of so subtle and devilish a meanness. It is certain that these three men, whatever their motive in coming to Job, turned out to be “miserable comforters.” Their sympathy turned into reproof; their reproof into dark insinuations of wrongdoing; their insinuation into the bitterest and most unjust accusations, for “they spoke all manner of evil against him, falsely.” Assuming to be the champions of God's justice, they thought it necessary to heap reproach upon Job in order to justify their theories of God's dealings. Failing of any proof of crime on Job's part which would explain his terrible sufferings, and being met from first to last with the most explicit denial on Job's part of any iniquity in him, they were compelled to fall back on their “theory,” and, rather than yield a point there, they finally charged Job with being a desperate hypocrite, so hardened that, even under the mighty hand of God, he adhered to his falsehood and refused to confess his sins. Their anger at Job was no doubt heightened by the fact that, masters as they were in argument, and learned as they were in the theology of the day, Job out-argued them and overmastered them all through. A more splendid debate than that between Job and his friends is not on record in the annals of man. It is a debate the reading and study of which would enrich any debater.

3. THE ACCEPTED THEOLOGY. In order to understand the whole argument, and to follow Job through this third and most terrible of his temptations, we must first get a clear idea of the accepted theology of that day among those who, like Job and his friends, were worshipers of the one only and true God. It was a theology based upon the traditional primitive revelation of God which had become more or less dim and corrupted—the speculations of honest hearts reasoning from their own religious nature and spiritual aspirations, and from the observation of the course of things in the world, especially with reference to what seemed to them to be the moral government of the universe. This latter source was derived largely from the relative progress and end of good and bad men. Summed up, the theology of their day was this: That God was a God of exact and unvarying justice; that he rewarded good men with prosperity and earthly favor, while bad men received in this life the just recompense for their wickedness in suffering and misfortune; that all God's dealings were in fact retributive. The problem under discussion, Job being the personal and concrete embodiment of it, was, “human suffering in connection with God's moral government.” Here was a man who had heretofore been greatly blessed and prospered. He had the reputation of being “just and upright,” which

was based not only upon what was obvious in the life of Job, but upon the fact that he was so largely prosperous. But now this man, hitherto so famous for his righteousness and his great favor with God, was suddenly stripped of his prosperity, hurled down from his high pinnacle, bereft of his children, and given over to most loathsome bodily affliction. There could be but one conclusion: Job's afflictions were retributive punishments from the hand of a just God who never failed to prosper the upright and to afflict the wicked. Job, therefore, must after all be a bad man, and this was the explanation of the matter. The arguments of the three friends were based upon these premises, and may be reduced to this formula:

God is just who taketh vengeance.

He afflicts those with whom he is angry.

He is only angry with wicked men.

He has grievously afflicted Job.

Therefore,

He must be angry with Job.

Job must be a wicked man.

On these strings of reasoning the three friends played continually. They brought their several arguments from three sources. The first of the three, Eliphaz the Temanite, argues from observation in support of the propositions above. "Remember, I pray thee, whoever perished being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same."¹ Then comes Bildad the Shuhite, with the same argument. God is just. He does not pervert justice. Your children have been swept away because of wickedness; and your other misfortunes are to be explained on the same ground. Better acknowledge your sin, and then God will "awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous." He enforces this argument by an appeal to tradition. "Inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers. . . . Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their hearts?"² Then comes Zophar the Naamathite, and takes up much the same argument, only he appeals to the law: "Know, therefore, that God exacteth from thee less than thine iniquity deserveth."³ Job met all these arguments as best he could, only he always stoutly denied that there was any wickedness in his life with which to explain his afflictions on the theory of retributive justice. He was bewildered with the mystery of God's dealings with him, for he held the same theology as his friends. It was this confusion of reason in respect to the God whom he loved and worshiped, and who seemed to be contradicting himself and acting unjustly by Job, that gave him the bitterest suffering.

4. **JOB'S DILEMMA.** Job was, indeed, in a dreadful dilemma. He knew and held fast to the truth that God was just. He knew that he was not a bad man; that the wickedness attributed to him by his friends was a false accusation. He had a good conscience toward God, and he could no more deny his good conscience than he could the justice of God. He could not, therefore, reconcile God's dealings with him according to the theory which he also held, that God only afflicted retributively. He must even give up his belief in the integrity of God's justice or deny the conscious integrity of his own life. It seems never to have occurred to him that his and their theory of the moral government of God might be wrong, and that affliction did not always imply God's anger and the wickedness of the afflicted one. To do either the one or the other was to plunge himself into moral anarchy. All through the contention Job upheld these two facts, nor could he see his way out of the terrible dilemmas they, with his suffering, made for him. "God is just; I am not wicked; and yet I am afflicted, and in so grievous a manner and so clearly from heaven that I cannot lay it to any hand but God's." He will not say God is unjust; he will not admit that he is wicked because he knows

¹ Job iv, 7, 8.

² Job viii, 8, 10.

³ Job xi, 6.



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to the contrary. Yet he is afflicted. Here are his afflictions standing between the justice of God and his own righteousness. How to explain this mystery was the problem. In vain he called upon God, but got no answer. In vain, he sought God for an explanation, but God was afar off and he could not find him. To lose faith either in God or his own integrity was alike maddening to him; and out of this madness Job uttered many rash, almost blasphemous, things. He at times seemed on the point of justifying the Devil by "cursing God." In his misery he turned to his friends, but they only heaped reproach upon him. From them he turned to God only to be met with silence. Thus the wretched man, confused in mind, torn and distracted in heart, first fled from God to man for sympathy, and then back again from the hard and manifest ignorance and dogmatism of men who would logically make him a transgressor, when he knew, as a matter of fact, he was not, to God, passionately calling upon him to rise up out of his silence and come near from his distance and vindicate both his own action in afflicting him without a cause and, at the same time, vindicate his (Job's) own righteousness from the foul and scandalous aspersions of his three friends. He vainly longed to die. He almost gave up the whole matter to take refuge in the wild anarchy of thought which seemed to surround him, and yet he so profoundly believed in God that, though God should slay him, even if his integrity and the mystery of his dealings were never discovered, he would still trust in him. In the celebrated nineteenth chapter we find him crouching at the feet of his friends, who were so bitterly wronging him, passionately affirming his faith in a divine Redeemer who would in the end vindicate him; if not in this world then in another. "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Here we have a dawning of that better hope and clearer understanding, which has come so fully to us, of life and immortality brought to light by the Gospel. Job saw it only "as in a glass, darkly," and in his deepest extremity it comforted him. His friends maddened him by their arguments, the fallacy of which he could not utterly expose but which at the same time he felt. They were justifying God, even as Job would and did justify him; only their defense of God made it necessary for them to accuse Job of having committed heinous sins, of which he knew he had never been guilty. But why had God so afflicted him? why did he not explain the ground on which these afflictions were administered? why did he not answer his cry for light? why did he not vindicate him before these false accusers? why did he keep at a distance from him, in the hour of his bitterest trouble and need? These were the elements in the confusion that filled Job's soul.

5. **JOB'S ARGUMENT AND FAITH.** Through thirty chapters the battle raged between Job and his "miserable comforters," between his bewildered soul and the darkness in which God was hiding himself. Job often broke off from arguing with his friends, as if in his deeper agony he had totally forgotten them, and flung himself at God's feet and cried out in the bitterness of his heart for God. His soul thirsted for God — yea, for the living God — but he could not find him. Throughout the whole argument the three friends contended for their dogmatic creed — that rewards and punishments were meted out in this world — that sin brought with it in this life its terrible consequences, and that virtue was sure to be vindicated in a corresponding compensation of blessing. Because Job was so sorely afflicted, they argued over and over again, he must be a great sinner, guilty of some unparalleled wickedness which he was concealing from their knowledge. It is true, they could point to no sin of which he was guilty, but they argued there must be sin or there could not be such affliction, God being just. To admit that such affliction could be found in a good man's life would argue the injustice of God — a proposition which neither Job nor his friends would admit. The difference between Job's position and theirs was that, while Job stoutly upheld the absolute justice of God, he as stoutly denied iniquity in his life and maintained his own integrity. These two positions, with his unparalleled afflictions between, seemed inconsistent with each other. The friends seized on this inconsistency and assailed Job with arguments drawn from a commonly held

theology, and reinforced those arguments, as we have seen, from observation, tradition, and law. Job, on the other hand, still maintaining his integrity, admitted that in the present case God was, for some inexplicable reason, his "adversary," but not, he contended, from any wickedness in him. The friends replied that such a position was insulting to God and blasphemous in Job, and that his stubbornness in maintaining his integrity was only an aggravation of his sin. In the course of the argument, which must have lasted over many days, we notice that the friends intrench themselves more and more behind dogma, steadily lose their calmness, and grow bitter, unjust, and vindictive toward Job. Foiled in their efforts to convince Job of sin and bring him to their views of the matter, they assail him cruelly, and seem more intent at last on maintaining their creed than on justifying God. This is ever the case with mere dogmatists. On the other hand, Job, still overwhelmed with his afflictions, utterly unable to comprehend them, confident of his integrity (which is the only thing he absolutely knows), and equally confident of the ultimate justice of God, draws nearer and nearer to God; continues his appeals to him for vindication and to justification of his own dealings with him. This is one of the most remarkable features in Job's argument. He has such an uncompromising conviction of the justice of God that he appeals to God, against God, in respect of the wrongs done to him. In all his arguments and outcries his face is steadily toward God and his appeal directed to God. He turns his back, with considerable contempt and disgust, upon his "miserable comforters," and will listen to no one else, argue no longer, and look nowhere else but to God for vindication. This is sublime faith, even though there be in it, apparently, a kind of impertinent irreverence. "My friends scorn me: but mine eye poureth out tears to God."¹ He is very bold in his argument. "Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and there is none that can deliver out of thine hand."² "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him. He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him."³ A conscious sinner would not dare approach into God's presence with such an argument; but Job longs for nothing so much as for the privilege of facing God and requiring of him an explanation and justification of his ways with him. If God be just and he be innocent, then God must vindicate him. This he constantly argues, entreats, and demands.

Another thing is apparent in the course of the whole argument, and that is, that Job is gradually changing his theological views, and reaching conclusions from the premises of his own suffering, which were not in his creed at the beginning. He is no longer sure that suffering is the necessary consequence of sinning. How could he hold fast by that old view while he was still conscious that there was no iniquity in him and that God was still and always perfectly just — that is, no such iniquity as that attributed to him by his friends and inferred from his sufferings? Then, again, he is beginning to perceive that the sphere of God's providence, the working of his ways, are wider than his own individual case, and are not limited to this world. He suggests that God let him die and hide him in the grave (*sheol*) until he be ready to vindicate him and bring forth his righteousness. He promises to rest quietly in that middle world, until God's time shall come, and then at his first call he will respond to the summons.⁴ God has more than one world in which to make his ways plain, his promises good, and his unfailing justice manifest. The new and open vision of a future life, and the arbitration of human affairs beyond the confines of this life, rises to its culminating point in the nineteenth chapter (before referred to) where he bursts out with that magnificent declaration of his new creed: "I know that my Redeemer [my Kinsman and Avenger] liveth; . . . and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Job had reached that state both of body and mind when he despaired of the recovery of one, and the peace of the other, in an earthly vindication, and so longed for death, but not as once he had

¹ Job xvi, 20.² Job x, 7.³ Job xiii, 15-17.⁴ Job xiv, 13-17.

done in bitterness, wishing he had never been born, or that death might annihilate him. He now wished that he might die and get into the presence of that Redeemer whom he was sure would vindicate him. He had nothing more to live for. His body was being eaten to the bone with the foul and leprous sores which covered him; his friends had turned from him; he was the object of their bitter injustice; his wife had forsaken him; and he had become the object of universal loathing and foulest suspicions. Not only was he charged with unknown and fancied crimes, but because he maintained integrity he was pronounced a monumental hypocrite and even a blasphemer, since he appealed to God for vindication, and charged the Almighty with visiting these afflictions upon him without due cause. He was rapidly growing quiet with the increasing conviction that in another world he would be fully vindicated. He had lost all hope for this one. From the end of the first colloquy Job discerns a faint ray of hope in the possibility of an immortality of future life, in which things which seem most wrong will turn out to have been most right. If a tree die it may live again. That is, a new tree will shoot up out of the old roots at the scent of water;¹ so it may be with a man. At the end of the second colloquy this hope of immortality rises into full-orbed splendor, for there he sees and confesses that Redeemer whom he knows to be alive, and whom he shall see out of his mortal flesh, and who will both vindicate him from the false accusations of his friends and avenge him of the wrongs he has suffered.

In the twenty-second chapter, the second one in the last colloquy, we see the Temanite throwing his last spear, firing his last arrow. He makes one more attack, and then, like a cuttle-fish, retires amid a cloud of accusation which he throws over Job. In vain had his friends sought to convict Job of crime, or point out even one sin against righteousness which Job had committed. Yet their theory of sin and punishment required that sin be found in Job. "According to our theory you ought to be a sinner. We cannot change our theory. Therefore, you are a sinner. And since your afflictions are unparalleled, you must be an unparalleled sinner." Thus they reasoned; thus, practically, Eliphaz spoke. They had been unable to pierce Job's armor of integrity by all the arts of argument and cunning insinuation; therefore, the last desperate charge of the Temanite. Without a scrap of evidence, he opens his batteries and charges Job with every heinous sin, every namable iniquity of which the worst wretch could be guilty; and then calls upon him to repent of these crimes which he had not committed, turn to God and confess his sins, and takes upon himself to promise that God will forgive him, and, if he return to righteousness, will restore to him prosperity. Here the Temanite uses a bribe, the very argument the devil has used, when disputing before God the sincerity of Job's righteousness.² Job answers, indeed, but he does not attempt to rebut these arguments, or further refute the calumnies of his friends. He has practically turned away from man. The whole argument has been more than threshed out; and he is more and more disposed to turn the whole matter over to God for solution. From the beginning, Job, like a child to its mother, creeps closer and closer to God—to the hand that chastises. Friendless in this world, weary of life, overwhelmed with afflictions which seem to him to have come upon him without cause, distressed beyond measure because he cannot reconcile God's dealings with him with what he ever firmly believes to be his unchanging character—his goodness and justice—he yet longs for God and lays himself at his feet, and casts all his care and trouble upon him. He is not afraid of God, though he cannot understand his ways. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

We now reach the conclusion of this magnificent historic poem. The controversy between Job and his friends came to a natural end, both for the reason that they had exhausted every argument they could think of, and failed to move Job from his stubborn double position. "I have not sinned; and God is just." Job was quite sure of his own integrity, and thoroughly

¹ Job xiv, 7.

² Job xxii, 23-30.

loyal to his conscience. He was also absolutely sure of God's integrity. His anguish was between these two positions. The friends were sure of their theory and, therefore, could do naught else than infer Job's guilt. The difference between their position and Job's was that Job certainly knew his integrity, and they only inferred his guilt. Throughout the whole course of the debate the friends grew more haughty, hard, bitter, and unfeeling toward Job, while he grew steadily more quiet, gentle, and trustful. Zophar, the most narrow-minded of the three friends, dropped out of the debate altogether, and Eliphaz, the wisest and ablest of the three, resorted at last, with an utter loss of temper, to those open and despicable charges against Job of which we have spoken and for which he had not the slightest proof. It never occurred to him that his theory of God and his dealings with men might be altogether wrong. On the other hand, Job, starting with the same theology as that held by his friends, yet knowing that, in his case, the theory did not hold good, steadily drew nearer to God, accusing him at times of injustice, even pitting his own righteousness against God's dealings, and passionately calling on God to vindicate himself, thus venturing even to judge God; yet all the time flinging himself on God, and proclaiming his entire justice, although he could not understand it. There is, in spite of these outbreaks of passion, a sublime reverence in his attitude toward God. His own sufferings at times seemed much less to him than his trouble about God. His afflictions were not so much a reproach to him as to God, for they laid God seemingly under a charge of injustice from which Job could not, except by a blind faith, vindicate him. This conflict drove Job to suspect the correctness of his theology—the theology of the time, which both he and his friends held. He came to suspect that God had other modes of procedure than those upon which all their theories were based. Thus, afflictions not only broadened his mind and enlarged his heart, but also broadened his theology.

We now come to a new act in the drama. Elihu appears, and takes part in the controversy. He was a younger man than either of the four, and had, during the controversy, kept silence, through that modesty which characterizes the youth of the oriental countries. It seems that during the long debate between Job and his friends, a large company of wise and thoughtful men had gathered about the disputants, deeply interested in the arguments advanced by them in respect of the profound questions under discussion. To these as well as to Job does Elihu address his arguments. There is this peculiarity about Elihu's address, apart from its great eloquence and its calm philosophical and discriminating character: he practically tells us that he is speaking not only his own convictions on the matter, but practically the truths as he had received them from the Spirit of God. The inspiration he claims for them is of that sort which is suggested by the psalmist when he tells us that the "secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." It is impossible not to be struck with the sincerity and candid fairness of Elihu in his discourses—his anxiety not to wound Job but to convince him and lead him to God in a way at once humble and uplifting. His kindness of manner and sincere solicitude for Job are in striking contrast with the hardness and unbending bitterness of the three friends. That Elihu contributes very materially to the wealth of the poem, and advances and enlarges the whole character of it, there is absolutely no doubt. We can but summarize his teaching.

He opens his discourse with an apology for his youth, but denies that wisdom must necessarily be confined to age; and maintains by implication that true wisdom comes from the Spirit of God and, therefore, may come to a young man even as to one of maturer years, especially if it has been sought in connection with a godly walk with God. He at once condemns Job for his over-assertion of sinlessness, and for his rash and hasty judgment of God and his ways. He condemns the friends because, with all their fierce argumentation, they had failed utterly to answer Job. Then, turning to Job, he points out that he had erred greatly in many of his assertions in regard to God's dealing with men and with himself. Job had complained not only that God had deserted him, and so, by implication, men in general when

they were in trouble, but that he did not in any way communicate with man. To this Elihu replies that God does speak to man. By dreams, afflictions, experience, and even by messengers, "angels" or teachers, such as he himself was—that is, by prophets, holy men moved to speak by the Holy Ghost. And here he intimates that it is not true that God's afflictions are always in anger; indeed, he maintains that they are always in love; that, even when they are sent on account of sins done, the purpose of God is still one of love and for salvation and not destruction. He refutes Job's charge against God that he is indifferent to the moral conduct of men, and maintains that he is always and exactly just; that he has no motive for being otherwise than just. He had made man of his own free will; he had maintained him in life and supplied him with breath. Why should God have done this if he had not loved man for himself. Moreover, man's sins cannot hurt God, nor can his virtues enrich him. God has nothing either to revenge himself for or to reward man for. Nevertheless, he is pleased with man's virtue, and grieves over his vice, but this more for man's sake than for his own. Besides all this, it is still true (although Job had denied it), that a man's virtue does in the long run bring him happiness, while his vice does in the long run bring him to misery. It is, therefore, profitable to be godly, and it is disastrous to follow after wickedness. God does strike down the wicked and he does vindicate the righteous. Not to administer the moral government of the universe on principles of absolute justice would be to bring about a state of anarchy that would end in the destruction of all worlds—moral as well as physical. If he sends afflictions upon the righteous, they are not punitive but corrective. He is always just, kind, and redemptive in his dealings with men, and especially so with those men who are following after righteousness. Afflictions are to teach and purge men. Where there is no open sin, as there was not in Job's case, there was yet latent sin, or sin of nature, and perhaps unconscious and unintentional sins. These have to be brought to light and purged away. Afflictions are God's ministers for this work; in kindness and not in wrath he discovers man to himself. God delivers men out of affliction by affliction. Afflictions are the means of revelation both of the man to himself and of God; for they at once move a man to self-examination and at the same time drive him to God for inquiry and comfort. Moreover, if afflictions deprive us of the coarser and more outside comforts and blessings of life, they reveal to us and develop in us a finer and purer joy which, but for afflictions, would have remained unknown, and for which we would have had no capacity. Elihu also utterly denies Job's charge against God that he does not hear prayer, will not answer man's cry, and hides himself. If God does not answer the cry of man at once, it is far more likely that man has asked amiss, in passion or anger, or out of a mere impulse springing from immediate suffering or discomfort, or even out of pride, than that God has kept silence through indifference. Man is a greater being than a brute or a bird. If God hears the cry of the raven, the lowing of the cattle, and the roar of the young lion, it is because they know no better than to cry when they are hungry and thirsty; but man knows more than this, and to demand that God shall deliver him out of every situation of discomfort at the very moment is to put himself on the level with beasts and birds. Again, God hears and delays to answer because to answer immediately in many cases would be to condemn man instead of saving him. Suppose he had appeared at once in answer to Job's furious and passionate challenge for vindication; he would have had to expose the many imperfections of which Job was unconscious, and present him in a character which would have been worse to bear than the slanderous inferences put upon him by his friends. Moreover, to have delivered him immediately from his afflictions would have been to deprive him of their ministry. God's great power is of his heart, rather than of his arm. "He is mighty by strength of heart." Therefore, the truth is, that all God does is done from a motive of love. He is always just, and kind, and redemptive. "He exalteth by his power." That is, he uses his power to exalt, not to destroy men. If it ever turns out the

other way, it is because men willfully sin against light and the power of love, choosing to keep in with sin which always destroys, rather than to be led in the ways of righteousness which always exalt and save. Elihu closes his discourses with a description of a magnificent storm which looks so threatening and destructive, but which, upon the whole, is beneficent, and brings out the whole earth in brighter beauty afterward—"The clear shining after rain," and the golden glory of the light after the storm has passed. So it shall be with the man who emerges out of a storm of afflictions. We cannot understand all the mysteries of nature; so neither can we understand all the mysteries of the workings of God's moral and providential government. But we can understand enough to know that the one is as beneficent as the other. Therefore, let us wait and trust on. "The just shall live by faith;" and he that putteth his trust in God shall never be confounded, but "kept in perfect peace."

After Elihu's discourse God speaks to Job out of the tempest. The discourse explains no mysteries, solves no problems. But that God should speak to him at all is the one thing that humbles Job and makes him ashamed. It is not argument or philosophical unfolding of theological discourse that convinces the spirit of man, either by humbling or exalting him; it is the spiritual vision of God, in the light of which we get a true vision of ourselves. When Job saw God and heard him speak to him, then he fell on his face and cried out: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." If we had the vision of God, we should have the same estimate of ourselves. After this God forgives Job his sins, and restores to him his prosperity and position. Moreover, he rebukes his censorious and unjust friends, and commands them to seek the benefits of Job's intercession, the offering of an atonement for them.

The lessons to be derived from the Book of Job, useful for all ages, are so many that it is impossible to enumerate them all or the half of them; but a few may not be amiss:

1. A refutation of the idea suggested by Satan that there is no pure righteousness in the world; that all religion is selfish; that man only serves God for gain.

2. A refutation of the implication by Satan that God is incapable of awakening pure and true love in the heart of man. Therefore, the trials which Job underwent to demonstrate the falseness of Satan's accusation, both of God and man respectively.

3. That true religion is the fruit of faith and not of sight. That a really righteous man serves God, not because he understands all his ways, but because he believes in him and trusts in him, even though he should slay him. That the heart goes out to God and loves him, not for things received at his hand but for himself.

4. That God's afflictions are never purely punitive. That, on the other hand, they are corrective, and for the purpose of education and discipline.

5. That, in the long run, it is profitable to the soul, as well as to the material interests of men, to live righteous lives; and disastrous to live wickedly.

6. That, in the meantime, the wicked often seem to be prospered, while the righteous are forsaken; nevertheless, God will vindicate the righteous and overthrow the wicked. If full and exact justice is not seen altogether in this world, everything will be righted in the next, which is the necessary complement to this one.

7. That morality or human righteousness is not enough to satisfy the spiritual and ethical nature of man. He needs God, and will never be satisfied till he "come before him."

8. That the pursuit of righteousness will not in itself lead a man to a true and full knowledge of God. Revelation is necessary to complete our knowledge.

9. Our knowledge of God comes to us in three ways. By meditation and philosophical inquiry; by observation or the study of nature and man; and by revelation, which is a communication to man, out and down from God to us by his Spirit, sometimes directly through

dreams, or through deep convictions which amount to certainties; by experience as in afflictions; and by holy men as they are taught by the Spirit.

10. That God is not indifferent to our suffering or need when he does not immediately answer our prayers.

11. That he uses his great power for salvation and not destruction.

12. That the greatness of his power is in his love and not in his mere might.

13. That God is always just, kind, and redemptive, in his ways with us, always seeking our highest good. That to win us to himself to share with him the fullness and glory of his eternal being is the design and end of our creation, preservation, and all his providences.

14. That God has two worlds in which to make good all his purposes and promises. What we miss in this one, we shall find in the other.

15. That out of every evil God brings some good; and that he makes the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder he restraineth.

16. That Satan is finally defeated and drops out of the drama of our lives — is simply lost sight of and ignored.

17. That God takes account of our sins, and that while we may not be conscious of sins we are nevertheless surely sinful.

18. That it is only a spiritual vision of God that will enable us to see ourselves as we are.

19. That it is our duty and ought to be our privilege to "wait patiently on the Lord," whose thoughts for us are never evil, but always good, and who will surely bring our true and right desires to pass.

20. The inviolability of conscience. We must stand by our own conscience; but not against God, who is greater than our conscience; also remembering that the work of the conscience is to a large degree dependent upon our knowledge both of God and ourselves. Conscience cannot, therefore, be the final arbiter of moral questions.

21. In all our difficulties and afflictions, the only safe way is to keep our faces toward God and argue everything out with him as it were face to face.

CHAPTER V.

THE TRANSITION TO CEREMONIAL.

FROM Abraham to Moses may be called the middle period of the Hebrew development. In Abraham's day there was no formal priesthood and no elaborate ritual. He was, as we have already seen, the priest of his own family. The ceremonial consisted in a simple sacrifice in connection with which sin was confessed and atonement for sin was typified. There is little doubt but that Abraham, who is said to have "seen Christ's day," had some comprehension of the great Atonement, though he could not have fully understood it. The tragic act in which he offered up his only son Isaac — that son who came to him out of the course of nature, and in fulfillment of the promise of the Almighty (the miracle-working God), and for whom a substitute was provided at the last moment — must have suggested to him something wonderful in connection with Christ (whose "day he saw"); even as the saving of Isaac, by the interposition of God after the knife was lifted to slay him and he was to his father as already dead, was to him as a resurrection from the dead.¹

The same simple forms of worship which characterized the house of Abraham and Job, and no doubt other Semites of their day, continued in the succeeding generation and were found

¹ Hebrews xi, 19.



MARAH.

in the family of Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, the father of the twelve patriarchs, and the founder of the Hebrew people. When the children of Jacob, or Israel, went down into Egypt, in the days of Joseph's ascendancy, they, without doubt, carried with them their simple worship of the one only and true God. Subsequently, after the rise of the Pharaoh who knew not Joseph and who enslaved the Hebrews, we have reason to fear that their simple and pure worship was greatly contaminated by contact with the Egyptian or Hamitic religion, if not entirely superseded by it.¹ At the time of the Exodus, and especially in connection with the inauguration of the Passover feast,² the worship of the true God was revived in that ceremonial, which was the bridge by which they returned from Egyptian idolatry to the simple cult of the Semitic worship. Moses, during his controversy with Pharaoh, announced to him that by the command of God the children of Israel must go into the wilderness to hold a feast unto Jehovah. It was probable that in this command there was the intimation that a true cult or ritual would be inaugurated, about which the Israelites or Hebrews would develop their national life. That Moses was ignorant of what this ceremonial worship would be is clear from his reply to Pharaoh: "We know not with what we must serve the Lord, until we come thither."³ The problem before him was a most serious one. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." And yet in that age and with the limited knowledge of God which the people had, it was more necessary for them than for us that there should be a ceremonial more or less elaborate—a ceremonial which would at once present some outward symbol of God and at the same time keep the truth of his invisible and spiritual personality—separate and apart from all material and seen things—always before them. More than that, the people were to be organized as a nation and their religious cult must take on such forms as would have significance in respect to everything which entered into national life; for in that age religion was never separable from the commonwealth, and, in fact, was rather a state or national affair than a personal matter. Moses knew well that the materialistic worship of Egypt, with all the rites and ceremonies of that cult, would not do, and, indeed, must be wholly abandoned; but how to constitute a ritual apart from all known forms, and, we may even say, apart from some most natural forms which enter into worship either true or false, was surely a difficult problem. Clearly, God himself must reveal the essential underlying principles and give direction as to the ritual. Moses must, then, wait upon the Lord and be guided by whatever revelation might come. For three months the children of Israel continued in the desert, learning primary lessons of dependence upon God, especially as to temporal providences. They were in a wilderness without food or water, a vast host of some millions of men, women, and children, with flocks and herds, besides camp equipage and all the spoil they had brought out of Egypt. During this time God fed them from heaven, and gave them drink from the smitten rock. He also taught them how he would fight for them, defend them, and give them victory over their enemies. All this experience was most necessary to bring them to understand and know that their God was not as the gods of the heathen or of Egypt—that he was a real God, ever present with them, to be revered, feared, and obeyed. It was during this time of instruction and discipline that that most important first principle of ethical teaching was brought home to them. God must be obeyed. Swift punishment followed upon disobedience, while obedience was followed by God's good pleasure. Sometimes the punishment was as terrible as it was swift, because they could only be taught in that way.⁴ Not only prosperity and adversity, but life and death hang upon our obedience to God. This is not the highest truth in revelation, but it is the initial truth in religion.⁵

After the bitter but triumphant experience at Rephidim,⁶ Moses erected an altar upon which, presumably, he offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving to Jehovah and called "the name of

¹ Joshua xxiv, 14-23.

² Exodus xii.

³ Exodus x, 26.

⁴ Leviticus, x, 2.

⁵ See Exodus xvi-xviii.

⁶ Exodus xvii, 8-13.

it Jehovah-nissi," that is "The Lord my Banner," or "The Captain of my Salvation," or my "Deliverer."¹ This act of worship was no doubt the simple old worship of Abraham, Job, and other early Semite patriarchs. But it showed a distinct advance in knowledge of God. Then came Jethro, the priest of Midian, the father-in-law of Moses, who brought with him Moses' wife and two sons. Jethro was no doubt a God-fearing man, of the order of "truth seekers" found in all the ages, who, upon admitting Moses into his family forty years before, had received from him the knowledge of the true God, which knowledge was now confirmed upon the occasion of this visit to Moses, from whom he heard all the things which God had done for Israel. Jethro was not only convinced, but, we should say in the truest sense, converted; upon which he confessed God in the burnt offering (the offering of consecration) which he offered unto the Lord. His conversion was celebrated by a kind of communion service, for "Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God."² These and similar simple acts of worship were maintained during this early part of the Wilderness sojourn.

The Pillar of the Cloud, the visible symbol of God's presence, was always present in the camp, but no revelation touching ritual service had up to this time been given. Jethro persuaded Moses of the wisdom of organizing the children of Israel into a civil community, over which "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness," were to rule, and especially to judge between them in respect of mutual rights under the commandments and statutes of the Lord as they had been revealed to Moses up to that time.³ We see in all this the beginnings of national life, and the increasing and pressing necessity for some more permanent and comprehensive religious ritual. Here, then, at the foot of Sinai, they camped, after the victory over Amalek and the civil arrangements above spoken of had been made. The Lord began to speak to Moses definitely and in detail respecting his purposes concerning Israel, and gave to him there in the mountain, in outline at least, the civil and ceremonial laws of the new commonwealth. The characteristic features of this revelation were: (1) The graciousness of all God's purposes, and (2) The symbolic character of the revelation and ritual.⁴ The familiar twentieth chapter contains a record of the "Ten Words," or, as we know them more familiarly, the Ten Commandments, and the beginning of the symbolism contained in the altar to be thereafter used in worship.⁵ The following chapters contain a great variety of laws and regulations for the future government of Israel.⁶ From the twenty-fifth to the thirty-first, inclusive, we have minute and detailed instructions for the building of the tabernacle, with all its furniture; also directions for the setting apart of Aaron and his sons for the priesthood, with a description of their clothing, including the wonderful Urim and Thummim, and the nature of the service they should render.

¹ Exodus xvii, 15, 16.² Exodus xviii, 12.³ Exodus xviii, 21, 22.⁴ Exodus xix, 4-6, 18, 19, with Galatians iv, 24.⁵ Exodus xx, 24-26.⁶ Exodus xxi-xxiv.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAW AND THE TABERNACLE.

THESE remarkable Words or Commandments were thrice given. Once to Moses orally, and twice again to Moses written or engraved on tables, or rather tablets, of stone.¹ This first pair of tablets were broken by Moses on his descent from the mountain, in his indignation at the people's apostasy in the matter of the golden calf.² The breaking of these tables of the Law would indicate that the people had now come under a broken law, and were henceforth living under a covenant broken on their part, though not annulled; which would involve them in the constant necessity of grace ministered, not through broken law, but through sacrifice and intercession. The tables were renewed and again given to Moses, in connection with a most glorious revelation of the person and grace of Jehovah.³ The rest of the Book of Exodus is taken up with a detailed account of the construction of the tabernacle, and the institution of a priesthood "according to the pattern which Moses had received in the mount."

Of these wonderful Ten Words it is impossible for us to speak adequately. They are the most outstanding statement of righteousness the world has ever had. The centuries which have passed since, with all the advance of knowledge and culture, have never been able to improve or amend them, either by way of addition or subtraction. These words were most wonderfully summed up by our Lord himself in one of his answers to a scribe who questioned him concerning them: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely, this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."⁴ To account for this compendium of righteousness and religion apart from revelation is a hopeless task for any who may undertake it. Could it have originated with Moses in the Wilderness? This would be to ascribe to him an ethical genius and an intellectual mastery beyond that which is human, and as much out of the sequence of human nature as is the explanation of their origin contained in the book. Moses certainly did not learn these Words from the priests of Egypt, for they had no conception of such a law of righteousness, and especially had they no conception of God or of religion, whose first word is love. They imply that the God who gives such a command must himself be the God of Love; and that all religion must be its expression. Behold! here, indeed, is a revelation worthy of the highest conception of God and religion. These words were spoken to Moses by God, and are forevermore, as they have been all down the ages, the pillar and ground of religious truth. They do not, indeed, contain the whole truth of God. They have been called a transcript of the divine mind; but that is not an accurate statement. There is much more in the mind of God than is revealed in these Ten Words. "For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The Ten Words, then, are more properly defined as being the transcript of the divine mind as to what man ought to be. They are the standard of righteousness, and so become the revealer of sin in man when he measures himself by them, "for by the law is the knowledge of sin."⁵ Farther on we shall see how even this law, so perfect and so inexorable in its demand of righteousness, becomes the very foundation and life of that mercy of God which is freely administered to sinful man from off the mercy seat. For when the law is met by the great atonement it will be seen that God is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins."⁶

¹ Exodus xx, 2-17, xxxi, 18, xxxii, 16.

² Exodus xxxii, 19.

³ Exodus xxxiv, 4-9.

⁴ Mark xii, 29-31.

⁵ Romans iii, 20.

⁶ I. John i, 9.

The law was engraved on two tables, or tablets, of stone. This is usually taken as symbolic of the fact that religion or righteousness has to do with both heaven and earth, with God and man. The number of the commandments, ten, is not without significance, as throughout the Bible, as is still true in all oriental countries, the number *ten* symbolized perfection or completeness. There is also significance in the division of the commandments into two sets of five each. Five being a symbol of imperfection shows that to keep either table to the exclusion of the other would be ethically imperfect. "The Lord thy God," and "thy neighbor as thyself" must be considered together. The division of the ten commandments into two sets of five each is the common way of looking at them. Five were engraved on either of the two tablets, the first five referring to God, and the second five referring to obligations from man to man. The fifth commandment, which enjoins obedience from children to their parents, has by



MOSES RECEIVING THE TABLETS.

many been supposed to belong more properly to the group which enjoins obligation upon man to his fellow man, but to the Jewish mind obedience to parents was an act of piety rather than the discharge of mutual obligation. It, therefore, takes its place with the four preceding commandments having reference to piety. A disobedient child, either son or daughter, could in no case be considered a pious person, even in respect of the claims of God. It ought also to be observed that all the commandments, with the possible exception of the fourth, which refers to the sabbath, are grounded not on an arbitrary will of God but in the very moral constitution of man. The worship prescribed toward God conforms with the religious instincts of man; so does the piety due to parents, so do all the obligations toward our neighbor conform to our own inherent sense of right. Even the rest prescribed upon the seventh day is found to be in harmony with the best moral, spiritual, and physical conditions of life, though, in the nature of the case, the sabbath observance is not so obviously a duty as are the others. Whether

we look up to the heavens or abroad upon the earth, whether we consider our duty to God or our obligations to our fellow men, we cannot possibly get on religiously, ethically, or even civilly, without the law given on Sinai. If we consider this law as the work of man, how bold was that man who assumed to utter a law at once worthy of God and comprehensive of all the rights of man! And yet how perfect is this law, in both these respects! Who will add to it and who will take from it, by pointing out deficiencies or superfluities?

Hitherto the children of Israel had worshiped under the blue sky. Their temple comprehended all space. Now God, having given them his law, by which their relations to him and to their neighbors are clearly defined, calls upon them to build him a tabernacle in which he may dwell among them. "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye shall take my offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen," etc., "And let them make me a Sanctuary; that I may dwell among them."¹ This command for a Sanctuary in which the Ark of the Covenant was to dwell, and over which the glory of God was to rest, was, as has been said, "the passing symbol of an eternal truth." That is, God has come down to dwell amongst us; he has "mixed himself up with us and our sins for our salvation." In other words, the central truth symbolized by the tabernacle in which God dwelt, and whose glory lived concealed in its Most Holy Place, is that of the incarnation. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."² If any have the thought that the change from worshiping God under the whole canopy of heaven, with the stars for lamps and the sun for the glory of it, to a comparatively small, though exquisitely constructed, tent, was a movement in the direction of limitation rather than of progress and enlargement, let them consider for a moment the utter impossibility of our comprehending God without limitation and the necessity of his coming nigh unto us and limiting himself, that we might know him and draw nigh to him. The incarnation of God in Christ was a limitation, and yet it was an advance in revelation and a great unfolding of the final purpose of God in our creation. Was the world ever able to know God without the limitations of the incarnation, as it has done since that great and transcendent event? Limitation is not always a contraction or a loss. We can conceive of unlimited license of thought and action; and we can conceive of a liberty of action controlled by certain limitations which is infinitely more adapted to our advancement than the unbridled license. For who does not recognize the superiority of liberty over license?

The outward history of the tabernacle begins with Exodus xxv. It was finished in about nine months, and the first formal act of worship in connection with it was on the first day of the second year of the Exodus from Egypt.³ When it was finished and set up on that first day of the first month of the second year of the Exodus, the cloud that had accompanied them all through their journeyings covered the tent of the congregation and "the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" — that is, the Most Holy Place.⁴ For a minute description of the tabernacle, its furniture and service, we must refer the reader to the chapters in Exodus from the twenty-fifth onward to the close of the book. It was henceforth to be the meeting place between God and the people. The whole camp of Israel was now arranged in due order around this holy tent,⁵ God dwelling "in the midst of them," unseen, indeed, and yet in a true and mysterious sense visibly present with them. When the cloud which rested upon the tabernacle moved, then all the camp struck their tents, the tabernacle was taken down, all its parts covered and all Israel followed the cloud until it stopped and then the camp was reformed with the tabernacle again in their midst. Thus for forty years the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness, God in the midst of them even in their wanderings and sins.

¹ Exodus xxv, 2-4, 8.² John i, 14.³ Exodus xl, 17.⁴ Exodus xl, 34-38.⁵ Numbers ii, 2.

The following brief outline of the whole structure, and its contents, must suffice for the want of more space. The reader with these hints will be able to follow the subject farther by a direct study of the Scriptures.

1. OF THE TABERNACLE ITSELF. Its dimensions were thirty cubits in length, by ten in height, and ten in width. Reckoning a cubit at eighteen inches, we have the dimensions as follows for length, breadth, and height, 45 by 15 by 15 feet. The Holy of Holies, in which were the Ark and the mercy seat (where the glory of God dwelt), occupied the western end of the tabernacle and was one-third of the whole—that is, it was a square room, without other light than the glory of God. The whole tabernacle was surrounded by a great court of which mention will be made farther on. It was constructed with sockets, boards, pillars, veils, and coverings. The boards were placed on end resting in sockets of brass which were buried—or partly buried—in the ground. These boards, of shittim wood, constituted the framework of the structure, being closely joined and held together by bars of wood passing through rings, two rows of which were at the top and two at the bottom. The upright boards were kept in place by cords, or, as we would say, guy ropes. The entrance to the tabernacle was from the west, which was supplied with six pillars, instead of being inclosed solidly by boards as on the two sides and eastern end. This framework was covered with four coverings. The first one—that is, the one first laid over—was made of linen, in which was wrought with the needle blue, and purple, and scarlet threads. Besides this, it had representations of the cherubim wrought or embroidered on it, probably with thread of gold. The next covering over this was made of goats' hair. The next, again, was made of rams' skins dyed red. The outer covering was made of badger skins—probably seal skins.¹ The tabernacle was divided on the inside into two chambers. The Most Holy Place, in the western end, was ten cubits square, and the height being also ten cubits, made it a perfect cube—fifteen feet each way (taking the cubit to be eighteen inches). The Holy Place was a room twice the size of the Most Holy Place; that is, twenty cubits long from east to west, by fifteen cubits wide from north to south; or, in our measurement, thirty by fifteen feet, and fifteen feet in height. The Holy Place was divided from the Most Holy Place by a beautiful veil or curtain which was never passed, except once a year, by the high priest on the day of atonement. This Holy Place was again divided from the outer court by a curtain hung over the pillars at the west end of the tabernacle, and was the sanctuary where the daily services of the tabernacle were discharged. The whole tabernacle was a beautiful, and, in every part, and in all its furniture and service, a significant type of our Lord Jesus Christ.² In the fullness of time, God was manifested in the flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld his glory. Jesus, in his ministry and death, fulfilled all the typical prophecies of him contained in the tabernacle and its service. At the time of our Lord's crucifixion, the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom and the Holy of Holies exposed to view, revealing the fact that henceforth God and the mercy seat were not there. But it is said that he "hath consecrated for us a new and living way." "Into the heavens he has entered with his own blood."

THE HOLY OF HOLIES. This has been already briefly described. In this Most Holy Place God commanded the "Ark of the testimony" was to be set, and the veil drawn. The ark of the testimony was an oblong chest in which the two tables of stone were placed, with a pot containing manna, and the rod of Aaron that budded. The cover of this chest was overlaid with pure gold, and of the same precious material two cherubim—one on either end—were beaten out and placed. This golden lid was called the "mercy seat," and on this mercy seat, when the tabernacle was at rest, the glory of the Lord rested. Here he dwelt. And from this propitiatory, he communed with the people through the high priest, who entered "once

¹ For details see Exodus xxvi.

² John i, 14; Matthew xxvii, 51; Hebrews x, 20.

every year" with the blood of atonement, and with the golden censer.¹ The thoughtful student can easily see the significance of all this. The tables of stone in the ark of the testimony show us how all God's dealings with us are founded upon his everlasting law of righteousness. The pot of manna tells of his providential care for us, as a part of his goodness. The rod of Aaron that budded teaches us that priesthood is not an indifferent matter, but fundamental to the whole plan of salvation, and may neither be usurped nor dispensed with. The mercy seat points us directly to Christ, "who is our mercy seat," or propitiation.² The whole clearly points to the plan of salvation as fully wrought out for us by our Lord Jesus Christ. Since the law was broken as soon as it was given, it is evident that with and under that alone we could expect nothing but death. But with the mercy seat over and upon the law, and bound together in the same covenant ark, we understand how God can "still be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."³ The first ten chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews is devoted to the exposition of this tabernacle service and its significance. We earnestly commend our readers to a careful study of this most wonderful epistle, in connection with this account of the tabernacle and the service therewith connected, as set forth in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. No Christian can afford to live and not give time and prayerful study to these books of the Bible.

THE HOLY PLACE. This, as we have already indicated, was the eastern and largest room in the tabernacle. In this room was ordered to be placed the golden table for the "shewbread," the golden candlesticks, and the golden altar of incense. (a) *The bread.*⁴ Twelve loaves were placed fresh upon the table every sabbath, and the old bread eaten only by the priests in the Holy Place. We know what this bread typifies. Jesus is the bread of life, and as, under the New Testament dispensation, all the Lord's people are priests, having access by his blood, it tells us that there is now unbroken communion between God and his people through our Lord Jesus Christ. (b) *The golden candlestick.* This was a beautiful lamp-stand, having one central stem with six branches, three on either side. It was made of pure gold, containing a talent of that precious metal, and worth in our money more than \$25,000. A lamp of olive oil was placed on each branch, as well as on the central stem. It was the duty of the high priest to trim and fill these lamps every morning, and they burned continually day and night, and furnished the only light in the Holy Place—none being admitted from the outer world.⁵ Here we have Jesus set before us again as our Light, the "true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."⁶ (c) *The altar of incense.* This was the third article of furniture in the Holy Place, also made of gold. On this altar was burned continually, with fire taken from the brazen altar outside the tabernacle first kindled from heaven, sweet spices which rose heavenward, filling the whole place with a sweet smell.⁷ The high priest commenced the morning and evening worship by offering incense upon this altar. The time of offering incense was the time of public prayer,⁸ and the burning of incense was the type of prayer. David used it as such.⁹ John speaks of this service, linking it with "the prayers of the saints."¹⁰ No doubt there is also a deep significance in this service, as relating to the prayers of our Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf. Indeed, our prayer can only ascend to God as odors of sweet incense, when they go up through him, and with his prayers for us, "who ever liveth to make intercession."

THE COURT. Round about the tabernacle there was a court or open space, inclosed by a curtain of linen, or possibly open work, suspended from sixty pillars, which were placed in sockets and held in place by cords attached to the capitals of the pillars and made secure by tent-pins made of brass, driven into the ground on either side. This court was one hundred cubits by fifty, or one hundred and fifty feet long by seventy-five feet in width.¹¹ A curtain of

¹ Exodus xxv, 10-22; Hebrews ix, x; I. Peter i, 12.

² Romans iii, 25; I. John ii, 2.

³ Romans iii, 20-26.

⁴ For particulars concerning the table of shewbread, see Exodus xxv, 23-30, xxvi, 35; Leviticus ii, 13, xxi, 6, 8, 17, 21, 22, xxiv, 5, 7-9.

⁵ Exodus xxv, 31-39, xxvii, 20, 21, xxx, 7, 8.

⁶ John i, 9, viii, 12, ix, 5.

⁷ Exodus xxx, 1-8.

⁸ Luke i, 10.

⁹ Psalm cxli, 2.

¹⁰ Revelation v, 8, viii, 3, 4.

¹¹ Exodus xxvii, 9-18.

superior needlework was suspended from the pillars in front of the court, corresponding with the door to the tabernacle. Within this court was placed: (a) *The altar of burnt offering*—not immediately before the door, but in line with the door; for between this altar and the door was the “brazen laver.”¹ This altar was made of wood, covered with plates of brass, having hooks (called horns) at each corner, probably to denote strength. They were sometimes used for securing victims, previous to sacrificing them.² It was “to make reconciliation upon”—that is, between God and his offending people. It fittingly sets forth to us the work of our Lord on the cross.³

This altar was the central point of service in connection with the tabernacle. More importance is attached to it than to any other. It was “*the altar*” preëminently. No one could pass into the tabernacle except he first passed this altar. It stood guard, as it were, not only over the tabernacle, but especially over the Most Holy Place.⁴ It was the place of transference of the guilt of the people from themselves to their offerings, while the virtue and excellence of the offerings were imputed to them. We turn from this brazen altar to Christ himself, “who is his only altar,” and sing with our hymnist:

My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of thine;
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

My soul looks back to see
The burdens thou did'st bear
While hanging on the cursed tree,
And knows her guilt was there.

(b) *The laver of brass.* This was placed between the altar and the tabernacle.⁵ In this laver the priests were to wash their hands and feet before going into the tabernacle—thus denoting the necessity of holiness in worshiping, and especially in the service of God. The neglect of this duty was visited with the penalty of death. The spiritual significance of this is further seen, no doubt, in the cleansing work of the Holy Ghost in connection with the sacrificial work of Christ.⁶ Not only must we partake of the righteousness of Christ through his voluntary sacrifice for us, but we must be born again and sanctified by the work of the Holy Ghost, before we may either worship or serve God in the tabernacle, much less draw near and commune with him from off the mercy seat.

THE ANOINTING OIL. Having erected the tabernacle, placed its furniture, built the court, and set therein the altar and laver, the next thing in order was to take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that was therein, the altar and all its vessels, the brazen laver, and its foot. All was to be holy unto the Lord, and, therefore, everything was hallowed by the oil. This oil was a peculiar compound.⁷ It was very precious, and very sweet in its perfume; it was made by a recipe handed down from God himself, was forbidden to be compounded or used except for the sole purpose of holy anointing oil for the tabernacle and the priests, and a portion of it was laid up before the ark of the testimony. This undoubtedly sets forth to us, in type, the Holy Spirit and his work. Here we see how the blood of the offerings and the oil for anointing went, as it were, hand in hand, just as in the present dispensation, the work of Christ for atonement and the work of the Holy Ghost for sanctification and endowment with power must go together. Jesus, when he entered upon his public ministry, was anointed by the Holy Ghost, and wrought all his work in that Great Power. “He was anointed with the oil of

¹ Exodus xxx, 18.

² Exodus xxvii, 1-8; Leviticus viii, 15.

³ Colossians i, 20, 22.

⁴ Exodus xxix, 37; Matthew xxiii, 19.

⁵ Exodus xxx, 18-21.

⁶ Ephesians v, 25-27; Titus iii, 5, 6.

⁷ Exodus xxx, 23-38.

gladness above his fellows," and God gave him the Spirit "without measure." So, also, are we sharers in this anointing, and without it we are not, and cannot be, his true disciples or servants.¹ Thus we see how all things are consecrated by the Spirit of God—not only the priests, but all the instruments of service. We are all baptized by one Spirit into one body, and are made to drink into that one Spirit.

LESSONS FROM THE WHOLE. We have seen how the tabernacle was built, from the central Most Holy Place to the curtain hanging over the gate of the court. Let us now return by the way. God has builded and furnished his house, and we may learn how to come into his presence and live. First, we stand at the court gate. That is the door by which we must enter. There we are met by a priest, who holds it aside for us. That door and that priest is Christ; by him we may enter in, and without him there is no way to the Father.² Next we stand by the brazen altar, and there our offering is made and we are reconciled to God. That Altar and the Offering thereon is Christ, who is Altar, Priest, and Sacrifice to us. Then we pass on to the Brazen Laver; there we are sanctified, "for without holiness, no man can see the Lord." That Laver is the Holy Ghost taking the things of Christ, and showing them to us; and "shedding on us abundantly the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost by Jesus Christ." Then we are admitted into the Holy Place, where prayer and communion are carried on through the priest, in the light of the Golden Candlestick, we eating the shewbread, and burning the incense of prayer upon the golden altar. At last we come to the Holiest of All. Thank God! the veil that hitherto has separated us from the very presence and glory of God has been, once for all, "rent asunder" from the top to the bottom, and we may come "boldly into his presence," "with full assurance of faith," and have "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," and with the blessed Holy Spirit. Under the law it was death to enter that Holy of Holies. Now that the veil is rent asunder and the way into the Holiest of All opened to us, it is death if we do not enter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PRIESTHOOD.³

AT the same time that instructions were given for the building and furnishing of the tabernacle, minute directions were also given for the setting apart, through ordination and consecration, of certain men for the priesthood. The elaborate ritual in connection with the tabernacle would require the services of specially trained and educated men.

The history of the Hebrew priesthood is very interesting. We have seen that in primitive times the priesthood was not confined to any caste or official position. The father was the priest of the family, and this function descended with the birthright. Abraham and Job were both priests in their own families, and so it was and had been among the people who knew God in the pre-Abrahamic days. The contact of the Hebrews with the Egyptian priesthood no doubt greatly influenced them in the acceptance of an order of priests who should minister for them in the holy offices, and mediate for them with God. Joseph was married to a priest's daughter in Egypt, and Moses was educated and trained by the Egyptian priests. That he was perfectly familiar with their dress, clothing, and all that appertained to their service, there is no doubt. Possibly in the inauguration of the Hebrew priesthood not a few suggestions were

¹ Hebrews i, 9; John iii, 34, xx, 22; Acts ii, 4, 38; Romans viii; Ephesians i, 13, ii, 18-22, iii, 5-16, iv, 3, 4, 30, vi, 17.

² John xiv, 6.

³ Exodus xxvii-xxix; Leviticus viii.



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borrowed, as without doubt the same was done in the matter of the construction and furnishing of the tabernacle; but, at the same time, there are such radical differences observed that we are certain that many of the vile and superstitious practices and customs of the Egyptians were protested against—as, for instance, the Hebrew priests were so clothed and so served that their nakedness should not be apparent to the worshipers who claimed their service.¹ Many of the rites of the Egyptians in the exposition of their nature worship were very obscene; whereas Moses was careful that the utmost purity and chastity should characterize all that pertained to the worship of God. The fundamental doctrine inculcated in the Hebrew worship was the holiness of God.

The twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth chapters of Exodus and the eighth chapter of Leviticus contain the main particulars of the call and consecration of the Aaronic priesthood. “And take thou unto thee Aaron, thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest’s office, even Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron’s sons.”² Aaron was the high priest, as was subsequently shown, while his four sons were associated with him. The high priesthood descended with the birthright. In the mean time, the sons of the high priest seemed to have exercised all the functions of their father except that of entering into the Holiest of All on the annual day of atonement.

The functions of the priest were essentially those of a mediator between the congregation and God. Very early in the history of religion the sense of sin suggested to worshipers—no doubt the suggestion was a remnant of a primitive revelation—the need of someone to intercede and mediate for them with God. Job did so for his children when he offered sacrifices for them in case they had sinned through carelessness or forgetfulness.³ The priest went with the sacrifice to God, on behalf of those for whom he mediated. In the Hebrew ritual, as will be seen when we come to examine the various offerings, the priest was at once the representative of the offerers and their mediator with God. This is particularly seen in connection with the great annual atonement when the priest went into the Holiest of All to appear in the presence of God for the people, and receive for them the forgiveness of their sins.⁴ It was the business of the priests, and particularly of the associated priests, to meet the people at the gate of the tabernacle and receive their offerings for sacrifice, hear their confessions, and make their offerings for them. It was also their business to meet the people and transact any business for them where questions of wrong and trespass occurred between man and man. Later on, their functions took on an ethical character. They were the teachers of the people, particularly of the children; in fact, the office of prophet was not altogether disassociated from theirs, especially in the earlier days of the priesthood, before the order of prophets arose.

The ceremonies in connection with their selection, qualification and consecration, were very minute and circumstantial, all having a symbolical and instructive significance in respect of the Holiness of God, the exceeding sinfulness of men, and the necessity of being made clean from all sin before coming into God’s presence. We can only point out some of the more marked characteristics of these ceremonials, leaving the reader to follow up the study in the Bible itself.

The twenty-eighth chapter of Exodus gives us a detailed description of the high priest’s robes and his clothing, as also the less complete clothing of the associate priests. There were eight pieces in the dress of the high priest. The breeches of linen to hide his nakedness,⁵ the inner coat, or linen shirt or tunic; the linen girdle; the robe of the ephod; the ephod; the breastplate and shoulder pieces; the bonnet or turban; and the golden mitre. The ephod was the chief article of this clothing. It was woven of gold, blue, purple, and fine-twined linen,

¹ Exodus xx, 26; xxviii, 42.

² Exodus xxviii, 1.

³ Job i, 5.

⁴ Compare Leviticus xvi with Hebrews ix, x.

⁵ Exodus xxviii, 42.

the whole beautifully embroidered.¹ It was made of two pieces joined at the shoulders, and thus hung down on the back and over the breast of the high priest. This was emphatically the “garment of salvation” to set forth our Lord’s perfect righteousness, and the “robe of righteousness” in which his people are clothed “for his sake.” On the shoulders where the ephod was joined were fastened two onyx stones, on either of which were engraved the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; on the front of the ephod there was the beautiful breastplate, composed of four rows of precious stones—three in each row. On each of these stones there was engraved the name of one of the tribes. These were hung by a curious and ingenious device upon the ephod. The shoulder pieces were called, or said to be for, “a memorial of Israel,” to be borne on the shoulders of Aaron before the Lord. The breastplate, with its twelve glorious and shining stones, lay upon Aaron’s breast and was called the “breastplate of judgment.” Nothing could be more symbolically beautiful than the position and meaning of these stones. The high priest represents our Lord Jesus Christ, the true and Only Living High Priest, who always stands in presence of God for us. On his shoulders he bears up his people, even as the government is upon his shoulders.² He takes the responsibility of bearing us always before the Lord. He is our strength to bear us up. On his breast, as it were over and in his heart, he carries us always for judgment or justification—a justification which rests upon his love for us, who gave himself a sacrifice for our sins. The preciousness and the ever-shining qualities of these stones, resting upon the shoulders and upon the heart of the high priest, showed to Israel the place God had given them by grace. This is our true standing with God in Christ. Most precious is the saying of Peter that all who believe have a like honor with Christ in God’s sight. The nearer and more the light is shed upon precious stones, the more the precious stones shine and glisten. So the nearer we come to God in Christ the more precious are we seen to be and the more beautiful in Christ. It is for us to apprehend all this by faith.³ Then there was the *Urim and the Thummim*. “And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron’s heart when he goeth in before the Lord: and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually.”⁴ Various passages of Scripture teach us that the object and use of the Urim and Thummim was to get the judgment of the Lord upon various matters which affected the details of Israel’s walk and life. It was an instrument for the revelation or communication of the will of God to Israel, or to any individual who appealed to it upon any matter upon which they wished divine guidance.⁵ It would seem from this that the high priest not only carried the judgment of the people before the Lord on his heart always, but brought the judgment of the Lord from the Lord to the people. Jesus not only justifies us by bearing us in his own righteousness before God, but he reveals the will of God to us in respect of our walk. The Holy Spirit does for us who walk in the spirit what the Urim and Thummim did for Israel of old. Over all this was placed or worn the “robe of the ephod, all of blue,” upon the hem of which were embroidered pomegranates, and between every two pomegranates there was hung a golden bell, which went tinkling as the high priest walked in and out before the Lord.⁶ The pomegranates and the bells alternated with each other, and are emblems of testimony and fruit. Even so ought we to walk and live before the Lord, both going out and coming in, bearing in our lives “the fruits of the spirit,” and giving forth the testimony of our lips—that is, as Jesus was both seen and heard, so, also, ought we to sound forth his testimony and show forth the fruit of his life and his virtues. Next we have the plate of pure gold placed in the front of the high priest’s mitre or turban, on which is engraved “HOLINESS TO THE LORD.” “It shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.”⁷ The high priest was always before the Lord, and the people in

¹ Exodus xxviii, 6. ² Isaiah ix, 6. ³ Exodus xxviii, 9-29. ⁴ Exodus xxviii, 30. ⁵ Numbers xxvii, 21; Deuteronomy xxxiii, 8-10; I. Samuel xxviii, 6; Ezra ii, 63, etc. ⁶ Exodus xxviii, 31-35. ⁷ Exodus xxviii, 36-38.

him were always accepted. He stood for them. So are we always represented and always accepted before the Lord in our Great High Priest.

The clothing of the other priests, Aaron's sons, is set forth in verses 40 to 43 — coats, girdles, and bonnets, and breeches of fine linen, all for glory and beauty. The clothing of the ordinary priest was like the clothing of the high priest, who alone had the ephod, and what pertained to that wonderful garment besides. The whole clothing, as I have said, is the garment of selection which sets forth the merit and work of our Lord for us, and which we put on when we put him on by faith.

We pass now to the consideration of the consecration of the priests, recorded in the twenty-ninth chapter of Exodus and the eighth chapter of Leviticus. "And this is the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them to minister unto me in the priest's office."¹ Before looking at two or three particulars in connection with the consecration of the priests in this chapter, I may remark that it was necessary that every man, even of the family of Aaron, who ministered in the priest's office should be "without blemish" — that is, a perfect man physically. Since the high priest represents our Lord Jesus Christ and the priests the Church, they must in the first instance stand for perfection, both as regards our Lord, who was a perfect man in every respect, and the Church which in Christ shares his perfection and is destined actually to be presented finally "a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."² We are, therefore, told that no one might come nigh to God in the priest's office to offer anything unto God who had any sort of physical blemish, or was in any wise deformed.³ This is most interesting and instructive, and certainly points to the essential perfection of our Lord Jesus Christ, the true Priest of his people, who, in the fullness of time, was to take up and fulfill in his own person, once for all, these significant types. For the same reason the priests, though they might marry, could marry only a virgin of Israel; no profane or divorced woman could be the wife of a priest. So strict was the rule of personal and ceremonial purity that if a sister of a priest should be or become unchaste it disqualified the priest.

Having duly examined them as to physical perfection, Moses proceeded to consecrate his brother and his sons, beginning by providing a young bullock and two rams, without blemish; some unleavened bread and cakes tempered with oil, and wafers of wheaten flour, unleavened and anointed with oil. These latter were placed in a basket and brought, with the bullock and the rams, to the door of the tabernacle with the priests. Here the priests were divested of their common clothing or old clothes, and washed with water. Then they were clothed with the special garments provided for them, those for the high priest and those for his sons and associates. The high priest in the meantime, having been clothed, was anointed with oil. This was the sign and mark of his preëminence, even as Christ was anointed with oil above his fellows. Then followed the ceremony of slaying the bullock for a sin offering, touching the horns of the altar with the blood and pouring out the residue at the bottom of the altar and burning the carcass outside the camp.⁴ The priests, under this law, of course, being men and types of Christ, must need be purged of sin before they could take the place of the Sinless Priest to offer for the sinful people. After the sin offering, there followed the sacrifice of two rams. The one was for a burnt offering, which set forth that the priest was wholly consecrated to God in all his service.⁵ The other ram was slain and offered as "a ram of consecration."⁶ The blood of this ram was taken and a portion of it applied to the right ear, and to the thumb of the right hand, and the great toe of the right foot, thus especially consecrating every part of the priest to the service of God. If the ear is consecrated to hear the word of God, the hand to do the will of God in all holy service, and the foot to maintain a holy walk, then, indeed, is

¹ Exodus xxix, 1.² Ephesians v, 25-27.³ Leviticus xxi, 16-23.⁴ Exodus xxix, 10-14.⁵ Exodus xxix, 15-18.⁶ Exodus xxix, 22.

the salvation of man come. After this, a portion of the blood, with the anointing oil, was taken and sprinkled alike upon both Aaron and his sons, thus showing their redemption, consecration, and sanctification. The atonement and the Holy Spirit thus being signified in connection with these ceremonies, then followed the offering of the meat offerings and the peace offerings, and instructions for the daily offering of atonement upon the altar, and the daily sacrifices of the two lambs as a continual burnt offering during the year. I have omitted to give very close attention to details here in respect of these offerings in connection with the consecration of the priests, because later on the whole subject of the offerings will come before us for consideration as they are set forth in the Book of Leviticus, which is the book of redemption.

The consecration of the priests having been accomplished, the Lord graciously concluded his instructions with this great promise: "There I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister unto me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the Lord their God."¹

CHAPTER VIII.

STRANGE FIRE.

ONE of the most solemn and awful events in connection with the inauguration of the ceremonial worship of the Hebrew people is recorded in Leviticus.² After the consecration of himself and his sons, Aaron proceeded to offer upon the altar the burnt offering, the meat offering, the peace offering, and the sin offering, on behalf of the people.³ Then, the offerings having been waved before the Lord, Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle and came out again and "blessed the people." Then befell a glorious wonder. "The glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which, when all the people saw they shouted, and fell on their faces."⁴ The glory of the Lord—what was it? Let it be remembered that the mysterious pillar of cloud which followed the children of Israel always dwelt or hung over the tabernacle, or else stood beside it. At night it became like a lambent flame of fire. This cloud was the sign of God's presence. The glory of the Lord was manifested when this cloud became red and fiery—when it glowed with supernatural fire—as in later times the glory of the Lord answered by the Urim and Thummim. When everything was complete, and the new ceremonial was about to be inaugurated, the cloud took on its fiery glory, which signified the Lord's pleasure with it all. Whilst they were beholding, lo! a flame of fire leaped from that Shekinah glory and fell upon the burnt offering lying upon the altar and consumed it. That is, the fire which consumed the first burnt offering, offered according to the divinely directed and instituted ceremonial, *was kindled from heaven*. Thenceforth that supernatural fire burned upon the altar; no other fire than that must thereafter be used in the ceremonial worship of God. "Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon," that is, incense kindled with "strange fire," "which the Lord commanded them not."⁵ Now, it seems that some time after the solemn

¹ Exodus xxix, 43-46.

² Leviticus x, 1-7.

³ Leviticus ix.

⁴ Leviticus ix, 6, 23, 24.

⁵ Exodus xxx, 9; Leviticus x, 1, xvi, 12; Numbers xvi, 18, 46.

inauguration of worship, Nadab and Abihu, two of the sons of Aaron, "took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not."¹ No sooner had they thus disobeyed the Lord and desecrated the holy service by "strange fire," than a flame of supernatural fire burst out from the cloudy pillar and consumed these sacrilegious priests upon the spot. "And there went out fire from before the Lord, and devoured them; and they died before the Lord. Then Moses said unto Aaron, This is it that the Lord spake saying, I will be sanctified² in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified."³ Aaron held his peace before this awful visitation upon his sons, who had presumed to disobey the Lord and approach him with "strange fire"—that is common, natural fire—instead of kindling their censers with the supernatural fire which the Lord had kindled upon the altar, and which he required should be used in all the worship of the tabernacle. The dead bodies of these two offending priests were carried outside of the camp and buried. Aaron was not permitted so much as to uncover his head or show any sign of mourning, under pain of being himself consumed.

The question naturally arises as to the significance of this supernatural fire, the strange fire, and the awful punishment which befell the two priests. It seems to me that the explanation and profound typical significance are not far to seek, and that there is a very great and important lesson in it for our own day. Let us, therefore, seek the explanation.

1. There are those who maintain that Moses borrowed his ceremonials from Egypt; that the tabernacle, and the priesthood, and the offerings were all patterned after Egyptian models. Without discussing this question here, let it be admitted for the moment that there was a similarity, more or less extensive, in the outward forms used in the ceremonials of Israel and those used by the Egyptian priesthood. For that very reason the Hebrew ceremonial and ritual service was, from the very beginning, distinguished by the addition of a *supernatural element*. That supernatural element was the "fire out from before the Lord," which "consumed upon the altar the fat of the burnt offering." It was this supernatural element in the Hebrew worship which distinguished it, not only from the Egyptian worship but from all other cults of the world. It was the offering of worship (the burning of the censers with the incense before the Lord) with "strange" or natural "fire"—fire of their own, or of human kindling—which constituted the grave offense on the part of Nadab and Abihu. In fact, this offering of "strange fire" was the denial of the whole difference between the natural and the supernatural in the service of God. All men are religious, and religious service of some sort or another is common to all people. God has given to us a supernatural revelation of himself and of his will concerning us, by the Spirit of God, and he requires from us a worship which shall be supernaturally directed and energized by the Holy Spirit. To make the application of this whole matter level to our Christian time, we may say that the whole, or almost the whole, difference between the religion of Christ and all the other religions of the world is this: The Christian religion is a supernatural religion—supernatural in its Scriptures; supernatural in the manifestation of God in Christ—in incarnation; supernatural in the atonement and resurrection; supernatural in the gift of the Holy Spirit; supernatural in the new creation, or regeneration, of all true believers; and supernatural in that, without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, nothing can be done acceptable with God. The Gospel cannot be effectually preached, except with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven; the Christian can neither pray, nor maintain a Christian walk, nor do any acceptable Christian work except he be energized by the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, there are those who say it does not matter what you believe or how you serve God, if only you be sincere. The natural reason and the religious energy of the flesh (strange fire) are just as good, as revelation, as the Holy Spirit (the fire sent from God) with which to perform our worship and service. Nadab and Abihu were the

¹ Leviticus x, 1.² Exodus xix, 22.³ Leviticus x, 2, 3.

progenitors of a merely carnal worship under divinely revealed forms. They had the form of godliness but not the power. They said to themselves, What difference will it make whether our censers be kindled with fire from off the altar or by natural fire? The incense will burn just as well, and smell just as sweet, and the smoke of it will rise as high, if kindled with natural fire, as if it were burnt with the God-given fire from off the altar. So men say to-day who deny the supernatural in religion. A good work done without the Holy Spirit is just as good as a good work done by the Holy Spirit. That is, the energy of the flesh in religion is just as good as the power of the Spirit. To follow the example of a human Christ is just as good as to believe in and follow a supernatural Christ. Indeed, it is the controversy between rationalism under a hundred forms and revealed religion, which is foreshadowed here in these long-ago times when God would be sanctified in this matter.

2. Fire has always been the sign of God's presence and the symbol of his energy among men. As far back as the time of Cain and Abel this controversy between strict obedience to God and the will worship of man was settled by fire. God commanded a certain kind of sacrifice. Abel obeyed God and brought an offering from the flock. Cain also worshiped the Lord, but he brought a "strange" offering—that is, from the earth, an offering of fruits. Why was it not just as good as Abel's lamb? Did he not offer it to the Lord, and was he not as devout as Abel? What difference did it make whether one offered a lamb or a handful of fruit? God answered by fire and accepted Abel's offering. "And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect."¹ How did the Lord signify his respect or acceptance of Abel's offering? Exactly as he did when he sent fire out from before him and kindled the burnt offering before the tabernacle, at the time of the inauguration of the Hebrew ritual. That this burning with fire from heaven was the sign of God's presence and acceptance is so well known to every Bible student that a simple reference to a few cases will suffice. Here are a few fit and sample illustrations of this great truth: "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee; send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion; remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice."² When Gideon doubted whether the young man who stood by him with a commission from God to deliver Israel was the Angel of the Lord, the test was made by supernatural fire. "And the Angel of God said unto him, Take flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so. Then the Angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes; and there rose up fire out of the rock, and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. Then the Angel of the Lord departed out of his sight."³ The same thing happened substantially with Manoah and the angel, in respect to the communication from heaven about the birth of Samson.⁴ The test by fire in case of the controversy between Elijah and the priests of Baal, as to who was the Lord, is so well known that I need only refer to it. "The God that answereth by fire let him be God."⁵ We know the result of this appeal. God answered by fire, and for the time at least the priests of Baal were overthrown and Israel recovered to their loyalty to Jehovah. The case of David's offering, also, on the threshing floor of Ornan, strongly supports the fact that supernatural fire was the constant test of the presence of God and of God's acceptance of man's offering and service. "And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the Lord; and he answered him by fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering."⁶ I mention one other case which confirms the view that supernatural fire from heaven was the one great feature in the ritual of the Hebrews that distinguished and differentiated it from that of any other cult in the world. We have seen God manifesting

¹ Genesis iv, 3-5.² Psalm xx, 1-3. Literally, see margin: "turn to ashes" or burn up the fat of thy burnt offering.³ Judges vi, 20, 21.⁴ Judges xiii, 18-21.⁵ I. Kings xviii, 24.⁶ I. Chronicles xxi, 26.

himself in fire in the Garden of Eden, by the "flaming sword"; in accepting the sacrifice of Abel, by consuming it with fire from heaven; in the Burning Bush, out of which he manifested and declared himself to Moses as the God of Incarnation and Grace;¹ in kindling the first altar fire in connection with the inauguration of the ritual in Israel; in connection with his appearance as the Angel of the Lord to Gideon and Manoah; in the conflict between Elijah and the priests of Baal; in connection with David's celebrated offering on the threshing floor of Ornan; and now, at last, we come to the dedication of the great and glorious temple of Solomon, which took the place in Israel of the tabernacle, after her national life was fixed and consolidated. When Solomon had finished his dedicatory prayer and offered the house and all its furniture and appointments to Jehovah, and besought his continued mercy upon Israel, Jehovah gave him answer by fire from heaven. "Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house."²

That this supernatural fire refers symbolically to the supernatural element in Christianity — namely, the Holy Spirit — there seems not the least doubt. In Malachi's prophecy it was declared that the Messiah should come as a refiner's fire.³ When John the Baptist proclaimed the appearance of Jesus he declared that he would baptize the people with the Holy Ghost and with *fire*. We know that on the day of Pentecost the apostles and believers gathered in that upper room were all so baptized with the Holy Ghost, his invisible presence being testified by the appearance of tongues of *fire*. Fire is the especial symbol of energy and enthusiasm. It is with this divine energy that God has accomplished his great work of redemption. By it (the Holy Spirit) Christ was incarnated, offered himself up a sacrifice for our sins and was raised again from the dead. He now carries on his work from heaven with the same energy or power with which he did his mighty works while on earth. By it he regenerates and sanctifies his people; by it he breathes power upon and into his people, enabling them to preach the Gospel and finish his work upon the earth. By it Christians are enabled to pray, to walk and to work for God; and without this heavenly fire, the Holy Ghost, it is all in vain that we seek to worship him.

The symbolism of "strange fire" is, of course, what we have already hinted at — the denial of the supernatural, the quenching of the Holy Spirit, and the substitution of natural energy in the worship and work of God for the supernatural Spirit. It was for this that Nadab and Abihu were so summarily punished; it is for the same offense under the wide and blessed dispensation of the Spirit that death comes so often and so terribly to our churches. It is true, that God does not now consume men who deny the supernatural and substitute natural energy for the Spirit's power, as he did those offending, disobedient, and presumptuous priests at the beginning, but he does leave them dead while they seem to live. Hence, we have dead men in the pulpit, dead teachers before their Sunday classes; dead office-bearers in the church; dead worshipers in the pews; dead works everywhere, because the Holy Spirit is ignored and religion is attempted in the energy of the flesh alone.

The terrible severity of the punishment which fell upon Nadab and Abihu may to some seem harsh and unmerciful. But not so. God was inaugurating a system of worship which was to lead that whole people up to life, and was at the same time pointing out the way in which he would save the world. It was absolutely necessary that at the very outset the people should be impressed with the great fact that they were dealing with God and not man; that obedience to God was the very first thing to be observed; and, therefore, that any contempt of his ordinances or disobedience to his commands would mean death. God has mercifully placed such beacon lights at the threshold of and all along every new and forward development of revelation and redemption. Thus, he caused Achan and his household to be slain for their

¹ Exodus iii.² II. Chronicles vii, 1.³ Malachi iii, 1, 2.



DAVID ROBERTS.

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covetous theft of the wedge of gold and the Babylonish garment from the spoils of Jericho, which had been solemnly consecrated to God.¹ Thus he smote down those presumptuous people who would pry into the Ark, and Uzzah who put forth his hands to steady it, which he had commanded them not to do.² Thus he smote King Uzziah, whose heart "was strong and lifted up," and who transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple to burn incense before the Lord, and thus presumptuously sought to usurp the office of the priest. "Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, from beside the incense altar." Thus the Lord smote him with a foul leprosy for his disobedience and sacrilege, "and Uzziah the king was a leper until the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the Lord."³ How King Saul lost his kingdom through deliberate disobedience, and how Ananias and Sapphira were cut down in an instant, because of their covetous practice and for lying to the Holy Ghost, is also well known to the reader. Thus God teaches by this great and terrible severity that he is a Holy God and will be sanctified by the people and before the people, not out of any tyrannical whim, as do some earthly monarchs, but because the salvation of the people depends upon their obedience to the law of righteousness. It is so under the Gospel as it was under the Law. If men died without mercy under Moses' law at the mouth of two or three witnesses, how much sorer shall be the punishment of those under the Gospel who trample under foot the Son of God, count the blood of the covenant wherewith they are sanctified an unholy thing, and do despite to the Holy Ghost!⁴ Truly it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, for he "is a consuming fire" wherever sin and disobedience are persisted in. From all this severity we learn that it is a dangerous thing, in the service of God, to go contrary to his express commands. We have to do with a God who is used to prescribe his own worship, not arbitrarily, but in love, grace, and wisdom—just to require what he has prescribed, and powerful to avenge what he has not prescribed. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell [through disobedience and unbelief], severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise, thou also shalt be cut off."⁵

¹ Joshua vii, 16-26.

² I. Samuel vi, 19, 20; II. Samuel vi, 7.

³ II. Chronicles xxvi, 16-21.

⁴ Hebrews xii, 25-29.

⁵ Romans xi, 22.



ACHAN'S PUNISHMENT.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LAW OF OFFERINGS.

THE Book of Leviticus is divided into four parts. Part First, chapters i-vii, is devoted to the law of offerings, or sacrifices as we often call them; Part Second, chapters viii-x, to the institution of the priesthood; Part Third, chapters xi-xxii, to moral and ceremonial uncleanness, its removal and punishment; Part Fourth, chapters xxiii-xxvii, to the institution of solemn feasts, and various other laws, exhortations, and promises. For the present we have to do with the first part, which relates to the principal and great offerings ordained by God for the worship and sanctification of the people. Having caused the tabernacle to be built in which he took up his dwelling amongst the people and made all ceremonial provisions for a proper and intelligent approach to him in solemn worship, obviously the next thing to be done was to institute by ordination the sacrifices or offerings which were to be made. Hitherto a single offering had been made, namely, an offering of blood or life, which was for sin rather than for worship; but now the time had come when the offerings should be clearly defined as to their significance and object.

1. Looking at the offerings as a whole we perceive that there are five: the Burnt Offering, the Meat Offering, the Peace Offering, the Sin Offering, and the Trespass Offering. These belong really to two groups. The first three are "offerings of a sweet smell," and were offered on the brazen altar within the court of the tabernacle, and, as we shall presently see, had in them no suggestion of sin. In this particular they differed from the Sin and Trespass Offerings, which were burned outside the camp, and were not offerings of a sweet smell. Different words are used to designate the burning of either class of offerings. The one used in case of the "offerings of a sweet smell" indicates acceptance, the other indicates wrath. The meaning of this will become apparent as we examine them in their order.

2. The next thing to be observed is, that these five offerings, taken together, represent the entire ministry of Christ for us, in his great work of redemption. The Israelites probably saw this dimly, and only the most spiritual of them discerned even so much. But we need only to read the Epistle to the Hebrews to understand clearly the typical and symbolical meaning of these offerings. The tenth chapter of Hebrews undoubtedly had these five offerings in view, speaking of them as a whole. They were the "shadows of good things to come and not the very substance." Christ is the true substance of these shadows which were cast before him as he approached, in time, the earth and the place of man's sin, moving forth "from the bosom of the Father."

3. The five offerings, taken separately, represent various aspects of the work of Christ. No one offering or sacrifice could possibly do that. Therefore, there are here represented five phases of his work. (a) In the burnt offering we shall see an offering without sin, given or offered to God. In this offering man had no part. It was offered wholly to God. This sets forth the truth that God requires of a man a whole and complete obedience or offering up of himself. In fact, this offering presents to us Christ entirely meeting and satisfying the first table of the Law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." The meat offering differed from the burnt offering in that, while it was also offered unto the Lord, it was only partly consumed and the rest was eaten by the priests. The substance of this offering was altogether different. In the burnt offering a life was offered; in the meat offering food was offered—flour, frankincense, green ears of corn, and oil. This was, in fact, an offering made

to God for man's sake. In other words, it was that phase of our Lord's work in which he perfectly met the requirements of the second table of the Law: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The peace offering sets forth the idea of perfect reconciliation and fellowship between God and man. A part was offered to God; the rest was eaten by the priests and the offerer. Coming to the sin and trespass offerings, we see an entirely different aspect of Christ's work. Here we deal with sin. The first, the sin offering, recognizes the sinfulness of our nature, while the second, the trespass offering, represents the sins or transgressions of the life. Both natural and actual sins had to be atoned for, and they were so atoned for by the offerings of the proper victims "outside the camp" while the blood was sprinkled before the Lord and poured out at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering. I append the following diagram that the reader may better understand these various offerings:

NAMES.	SACRIFICE OFFERED.	DISPOSITION OF.	TYPICAL TEACHINGS.
Burnt Offering.	Bullock, sheep, goat, dove or pigeon.	Wholly consumed.	Entire surrender to God. Fulfillment of First Table. Fulfillment of the Law.
Meat Offering.	Flour, oil, frankincense.	Part only consumed; the rest eaten by priests.	Pure and holy walk amongst men. The fulfillment of the Second Table of the Law.
Peace Offering.	Sheep, lamb, goat.	Fat only consumed; rest eaten by offerer and priest.	Peace, Reconciliation, Fellowship.
Sin Offering.	Bullock, goat, lamb, turtle-doves, flour.	Fat consumed; rest burned outside the camp.	Perfect sacrifice for sin. No condemnation to the offerer.
Trespass Offering.	Ram, money, compensation.	Fat consumed; rest of ram eaten by the priests.	Restitution and confession of sin.

4. The next thing to be noted is the order in which these offerings are set forth. If we contemplate Christ coming forth from the tabernacle to us, we see him first in the burnt offering, fulfilling man's perfect duty to God. Then we see him in the next offering perfectly fulfilling man's duty to man. Then, in the peace offering we see how these two offerings have made the basis of a perfect fellowship between God and man. Next we see him in the sin offering, putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself. In the trespass offering we see him the constant Advocate with the Father, by reason of his atoning sacrifice for our transgressions. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." On the other hand, if we consider the offerings as the way of our approach to God, we start from outside the camp, first confessing our sins, then our sin (the sinfulness of our nature)—this brings us into peace with both God and man (the peace offering); then, at the meat offering we take up and discharge our duties to our neighbor, and the consummation of our life is in the burnt offering where we present our "bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is" our "reasonable service."

5. Finally, for general consideration, we must keep in mind that the sacrifice or offering, the offerer, and the priest, are all types of Christ. He is the offering, he is the offerer, and he is the priest—that is, he is all these to us. We accept him as our representative and substitute. What can we offer but himself? who can offer for us but himself? and how can we come except in him? Thus is "Christ all and in all." There are many details which we must omit and be content with an outline study.

THE BURNT OFFERING. For the details of this great offering, reference is made to Leviticus, chapter i. It is both interesting and singularly comforting to notice the place from which the Lord gave these special directions to Moses. "The Lord called unto Moses, and

spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation." Hitherto all God's commands had been spoken from the Mount of Sinai: the place of fire, and blackness, and tempest, and cloud. But now how different the circumstances! "From the fiery mount went the fiery law," but here, from the tabernacle, we hear the Lord speaking, not of law, but of grace. Here he had taken up his abode and dwelt among "a stiff-necked people," only to recover them from sin by atonement, and not to destroy them under law. It is true that God is just as holy in the tabernacle as he was on the mount. But there his holiness was manifested only in connection with the holy law; while here, though relaxing his holiness not a whit, he manifests it in connection "with the perfect grace which characterizes the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." It is one thing to hear God speaking to us from the mount in the midst of a fire that consumes, and quite another to hear him speak to us from a tabernacle surrounded with all the provisions of grace and the means for putting away sin—in fact, from a mercy seat upon which the blood of acceptable sacrifice has been sprinkled. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." God speaking from the tabernacle to the children of Israel was the same to them as when, in these last days, God has spoken to us by his Son. There they "beheld him full of grace and truth," even as we do in the face of Jesus Christ.¹

It is necessary to remember that this offering refers, in the first place, to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is seen in it as offerer, sacrifice, and priest for us. That is, we identify ourselves with him by offering or laying our hands upon him, claiming him as ours, and standing with him as he stands for us.

The Offering. "Let him offer a male without blemish." This was the first consideration in all the offerings. Viewed in respect to our Lord Jesus, it points out to us that, before he could make an offering acceptable to God, he must be without sin. "He was holy, harmless, and separate from sinners"—"a lamb without spot or blemish." There was no fault found in him by God, and no fault found in him by men, though they found fault with him. Satan himself came searching him, and trying him with "all manner of temptations," but "found nothing in him" upon which he might lay any "accusation" against him, or on account of which he could impeach his holiness and righteousness before God. He "always pleased the Father." There are several interesting particulars noted in the second section of the text, where the work of the priest is described in making the offering. (a) "And they shall flay thy burnt offering"—that is, take the skin off. This act revealed the perfect health and absolute spotlessness of the offering, within as well as without. Our Lord was not only perfect in his outward life, but there was no imperfection hidden in him. (b) "And they shall cut it in pieces." Here its perfections are seen in every part. Not only was it without blemish as a whole, but taken piece by piece there was no fault in it. Each several act of Christ was as perfect as the sum of his whole life. There were no "buts" or "ifs" about him. As the bullock was perfect in its head, perfect in its legs, perfect in the inwards and fat of its whole being, so was Christ in thought, in walk, and in the secret energy of his being. (c) "His inwards and his legs shall they wash with water." This was a further search after blemishes. "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts." There is more difficulty in discovering sin in the inward parts of a man than in his outward parts—that is, it is more difficult to detect motive than it is to discover action. Therefore, were the inward parts and the legs washed with water. This action also rendered the offering ceremonially clean (as it was actually clean). When the leper was cleansed, he was washed to declare him clean. So this offering, having been searched in every part, was thus declared to be perfectly clean, and without the taint of evil about it. (d) It was a voluntary act. There was no compulsion on the part of the offerer to make this offering. This is fundamental in considering the sacrifice of Christ for us. "He gave himself," and "through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God."² No man

¹ John i, 14.

² Galatians ii, 20; Hebrews ix, 14.

took his life from him. "I have power to lay it [his life] down, and I have power to take it again."¹ It was his delight, in the matter of redeeming sinners, to do the will of God.² The voluntary act of Christ in giving himself up to God for the salvation of sinners constitutes no small part of the value of the sacrifice—indeed, it was essential to any value at all. What a glorious sight it is to the believer to stand at the foot of the cross, and behold Christ, not as a sin offering, but only accomplishing the will of God, and delighting to do so, rendering to him a voluntary obedience even unto the death, because as man he owed that to God, withholding no part of his being from him! What a contrast this to the first Adam, and to all men since then! In this voluntary act of Christ, he tells out to God his own deep love to him, apart entirely from the chief end of his mission. There was a profound and unbroken communion between Jesus and the Father in all the work he did. When our salvation is completed, and worked out in us, it will be so, also, with us. All duty will be lost in love, and all service will be the highest pleasure.

The Offering in Respect to God. It was a whole burnt offering. In this offering everything was given to God. The priest who offered it had no lot nor part in it, as far as their usual portion was concerned. Here we see Christ fulfilling the first table of the decalogue: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." And here all was given to God—the head, the legs, the inwards, and the fat, or, as has been suggested, the mind, the walk, the heart, and the energy of them all. It was to this offering that the apostle alluded when he exhorted the Romans, "by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." "It was an offering made by fire of a sweet savor unto the Lord." I have already pointed this out as peculiar to the first three offerings. This offering lay upon that brazen altar (as incense lay upon the golden altar) inside the tabernacle, and was received as incense with a sweet smell by God. He was pleased and delighted with it. There is no expiation of sin here; only perfect obedience on the part of the offerer. And shall we not gladly delight in the work of Christ in this respect? Shall we only consider his work from our own selfish point of view, and love him only because he puts away our sin? He is the holy and perfectly obedient Son before he becomes our "servant" in redemption. Is there not in him, in this respect, that which calls out our highest adoration, and strongest affections, as well as when we view him as our sin offering, burning under the wrath of God's holy justice—a being dealt with as the sinner's substitute? Here he is, the sinner's model and pattern, the firstborn among the many brethren whom he will finally bring to glory as whole and complete as himself. Our Lord begins his work on the cross as a whole burnt offering—an offering of a sweet smell; he ends it as sin and trespass offering. We first apprehend Christ as trespass offering; then as sin offering; then, as we go farther on with him, we apprehend him as our peace offering; then as our meat offering, and, finally, we know him as our whole burnt offering. As we thus go on, growing "in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," we may hope some day to stand before God ourselves, purged of all sin, "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," whole burnt offerings ourselves, offerings of sweet smell to God.

The Offering in Respect to the Offerer. We have seen that this offering was made wholly to God, as an expression of perfect love and perfect obedience, keeping back no part and giving even the very life, in the blood that was sprinkled on the altar. We have now to notice two particulars in which the offerer himself is said to be benefited by his offering. (a) "And it shall be accepted for him." This is not to be understood in a vicarious sense. The meaning here is that his offering shall be accepted. Now, since there is no offering for or acknowledgment of sin in this offering, but only an offering of "a sweet savor unto the Lord," the question arises: Can any man come into the presence of God and offer himself wholly to him, and be

¹ John x, 18.² Hebrews x, 7.

accepted? Certainly this cannot be true of any man of Adam's sinful race; but it was true of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the Father twice said: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He lived out his perfect life, and at last came before his Father and offered himself, longing to be accepted; and he was accepted. Concerning ourselves, our hope is that we may be and are "accepted in the beloved" now, and shall be, by and by, presented to the Father "without spot or wrinkle," and "faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." We may well bless God that Jesus was able, in the likeness of our sinful flesh, to make a perfect and acceptable offering to God of himself, even after his fearful trials under the law and under the stress of Satan's power. This is the first part of our completed redemption. His acceptance with God as a perfect man sets him, the man Christ Jesus, on high, and enables us to see the possibility—nay, the absolute certainty—of our final place with him in the glory. (b) "And it shall be to make atonement for him." This expression naturally leads the superficial reader to doubt what I have previously said, that in this offering there is no suggestion of sin, either in acknowledgment of sin, or in expiation of it. A closer study of it, however, establishes, rather than undermines, the view I have taken. Granting that the word atonement in the Old Testament always carries with it the idea of making satisfaction, we still have no difficulty. God may be satisfied in two ways—that is, there is in God's sight more than one matter about which to be satisfied. His loving and holy requirements under the law may be satisfied, or his offended justice may be satisfied. In the burnt offering we see the former satisfaction rendered to God, and this is testified by the savor of the sweet smell. Jesus, in offering himself to God without spot or blemish in character or act, perfectly satisfied, or atoned, the loving requirements of God from man under the law. This he did before rendering that other satisfaction or atonement for our sin and transgression, when he offered himself alike as sin and trespass offering. Thus we may read the clause. This offering was accepted in order that he might make the other atonement of satisfaction. This brings out a line of truth which is most precious to all believers who have desired to look into the glorious mystery of our redemption.

Such is the teaching of the burnt offering in its principal features. How gladly do we come to Jesus Christ and recognize in him the Voluntary Man who came to our world and to our race to make, on our behalf, perfect satisfaction to God in respect of our obedience.

THE MEAT OFFERING. For the account of the institution of the Meat Offering the reader is referred to the second chapter of Leviticus. I have endeavored to set forth some of the main features of the burnt offering—enough to put the reader in possession of its chief typical significance. The space at my disposal does not allow a full exposition of these interesting and important ceremonial offerings, but, even briefly as I shall have to discuss the balance of them, no doubt sufficient can be said to set the meaning of each clearly before the reader and, I trust, to induce him to pursue the subject farther for himself. The variety in the victims and material offered I do not discuss, as these are not material to the chief teaching contained in the various offerings. Before entering upon the details of the meat offering, it may be well to call attention again to the fact that all these offerings represent and typify the work of our Lord Jesus Christ for us, and in each feature—that is, alike as offering, offerer, and priest—we are first of all to see him. It is as we appropriate him, that we are united to him in all that he does. In the burnt offering we see him fulfilling the requirements of the first table of the Law—that is, loving God with all his heart, and soul, and mind, and making that love manifest in the entire surrender of himself to God in perfect obedience. In the meat offering we shall see him perfectly fulfilling the second table of the Law—that is, loving his neighbor as himself, and rendering to him a perfect love and service.

1. *The material used in this offering* is not life as we see in the burnt offering, but the fruit of the ground—flour, oil, and frankincense. These are the food of man. We may,

therefore, expect to see man having some portion — even the chief portion — of this offering. “And the remnant of the meat offering shall be Aaron’s and his sons’.” Our Lord had to fulfill the whole law in its righteous requirements before he could enter upon his redemptive or atoning work as the sin bearer. That is, he must offer to God a perfect life, wholly surrendered in obedience; then he must, as man also, give to his fellow man a perfect brotherly service. When God created man he gave for his meat, “every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is a fruit of the tree yielding seed.”¹ This, then, is man’s portion, the “meat offering.” At the same time God has forbidden man to eat blood, for that “the life is in the blood,” and God’s portion in creation is the life. When our Lord was on earth going about doing good, healing and blessing all who had need of him, he was offering to God on our behalf the meat offering. Had Christ only offered to God a perfect obedience he would have satisfied God apart from man; but this would not have sufficed, for God has identified himself with man and so man must have his portion. God will not accept his own portion without also seeing that man, his creature, has his. On the other hand, had Christ only given himself up to the service of man and made no offering to God, this would have been to rob and dishonor God. So it was that the burnt offering and the meat offering were always offered together.² The meat offering was the complement of the burnt offering; they belonged to each other. No service offered to God which does not include good will to man is acceptable with him; on the other hand, no devotion to man which ignores God is acceptable. Cornelius the centurion seemed to have a true conception of that which was fitting in the service of God. His “prayers” and “his alms went up for a memorial before God.” Thus he offered in spirit both the burnt and the meat offering and they are called a memorial, the very word that is used in connection with these offerings. “And the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar.”

2. In the various substances used in this offering we note, first, the flour, which is the proper food for man. This flour also sets forth to us how Christ is our true bread; the grinding of the corn, in order to its proper use as food for man, points to the breaking of Christ’s body, while the baking of the flour with fire points to his sufferings for us. He has given to us his broken body for bread. The oil suggests the Holy Spirit with which our Lord was anointed, and in the power of which he lived his life among men and wrought all his mighty works. The frankincense, that most perfect of all perfumes, indicates how sweet the whole service rendered by our Lord was to God. It is noticed that the frankincense was burnt with the memorial on the altar and did not pass to Aaron and his sons. The frankincense made the odor of the sweet smell. No leaven or honey was permitted in any meat offering, as the one was the type of sin and the other of things sweet, indeed, but liable to ferment and turn sour. On the other hand, every meat offering was to be mingled with salt.³ Salt, as we know, was the symbol of grace, and of that which preserves and keeps. Therefore, we are exhorted to season our conversation with salt.⁴ Thus we see how perfect was our Lord’s offering. The flour was fine, the oil was of the best, the frankincense of the sweetest, no leaven or honey in it, and the whole seasoned with salt.

3. We note in the second place that the meat offering was one of the “sweet savor offerings” made to the Lord. That is to say, there was no suggestion of sin or the putting away of sin in it. It simply represented Christ perfectly fulfilling man’s duty to man.

4. *This Offering was not Wholly Burnt.* A part was offered to the Lord by fire, but the greater portion of it was consumed by Aaron and his sons. The symbolism is simply this: in our relations to man we also have relations with God. The difference between philanthropy and Christian charity is this, that philanthropy simply recognizes man’s need and our obligation. God is excluded. But Christian charity teaches that no perfect good can be done to man

¹ Genesis i, 29.² Numbers xxviii, 12, 13, xxix, 3, 4.³ Leviticus ii, 11-13.⁴ Colossians iv, 6.

that is not first offered to God. We love our brother, and seek to serve him, because of the love which God hath to us, and we offer our service to him on the altar of our devotion to our God. In the much-vaunted religion of the Buddhist we behold service to man but no recognition of God—no offering to him in our offering to man. Any separation of duty to God and to man is fatal to both services. They stand and fall together.

5. *The Meat Offering was Eaten by the Priest and His Sons.* No doubt these represent both the servants and the sons of God, who both worship and serve him. To them Christ our Lord is meat, indeed, and we in our measure are also to be meat to each other. We are, therefore, exhorted, as we have “opportunity,” to “do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” With these very brief remarks we must leave the meat offering and pass on to the consideration of the peace offering, the third in the series of “offerings of a sweet smell.”

THE PEACE OFFERING. This, as already remarked, was “a sweet savor” offering like the burnt and meat offering, and so with them stands in contrast with the sin and trespass offerings. The point of most importance, however, in this offering is that God, the priests, and the offerer all had a part. God had his portion;¹ the offerer had his portion;² and the priest and his sons had their portion.³ If our Lord is seen in the high priest, and the priest’s sons stand for the Church—and that is our title as believers—then we see a perfect communion between all the parties concerned in the offering. In the former offering there was no participation on the part of the offerer in so far as eating a portion of the offerings was concerned. In the burnt offering God had the whole. In the meat offering God had his portion and the high priest and his sons had the rest. But in this offering we see God, the high priest and his sons, and the offerer each having a portion. When our Lord satisfied God with respect to the first table of the Law, and then satisfied man (through God) with respect to the second table of the Law, we are not surprised to find a third offering in which Christ is represented as bringing about perfect communion between God, himself (the high priest), and the man on whose behalf the offerings are all made.

Taken together, the three offerings “of a sweet smell” show us a perfect reconciliation or rather union between God and man, brought about by the work of our Lord Jesus Christ—man communing with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who, as our High Priest, has offered up to God for us his own body, with all its wealth of life. This is a much higher truth to apprehend than that which is shown in the sin and trespass offerings. There we find man reconciled to God on the ground of the remission of sins. But here we find man rejoicing, not simply in the remission of sins and the avoiding of the consequences of sin, but rejoicing in God and in Christ. Here there is no question of sin, but just communion. When we learn how to ground our communion with God on himself alone, and not on the mere deliverance from wrath, we shall reach a much higher spiritual life. The sin and trespass offerings are absolutely acceptable, and to know Christ in these relations is most precious; but after passing these we should come to the three offerings of a sweet smell in order to come into the sphere of perfect spiritual communion. Our religious experience is found in the apprehension of God in Christ, and in all the high and blessed offices he fulfills for us. This I cannot emphasize too strongly, inasmuch as so many Christians are seeking spiritual experiences in some kind of effort to arouse their emotions, whereas experience depends entirely upon our right apprehension of Christ, and our position in him, and so of our proper relation to God and man.

THE SIN AND TRESPASS OFFERINGS. For information concerning this group of offerings the reader is referred to Leviticus, chapters iv-vi. We must treat of these two offerings very briefly. As the first three offerings formed the group of sweet savor offerings, so these two stand by themselves and are offerings without a sweet savor. The first three had no suggestion

¹ Leviticus iii, 5.² Leviticus vii, 16.³ Leviticus vii, 31, 32.

of sin in connection with them and, therefore, the offerer and his offerings were for acceptance; whereas, in both these offerings we find sin, confessed, judged, expiated, and pardoned. The further details will be pointed out as far as the main features are concerned.

Let us go back to the Law for a moment, in order to show the connection between these offerings and that great revelation of God's righteousness. The first table of the Law required perfect obedience to God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." The second table of the Law, summed up in the words of our Savior, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is no less a part of our obedience to God, for God is the protector and defender of all men, and he exacts and demands that every man shall be true to all his human as to his divine relations and obligations. To refuse what is meet and due from us to each other is to refuse what is due from us to God on man's behalf. So great and good is God in his Creator-Fatherhood to all men, however untrue and disobedient they may be to him. Every man is God's man and, therefore, every sin or trespass of one man against another is a sin and trespass against God. It was this truth, deeply impressed by conviction on the heart and conscience of David, that led him, in confessing his sin against the Hittite, to cry out to God: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight."¹ To show, therefore, the double obligation which every Israelite owed to Jehovah under the law of perfect righteousness, the burnt offering and the meat offering were instituted. These offerings were made on the brazen altar at the door of the tabernacle and were "for his acceptance"—that is, to show that his offering and, therefore, himself, was accepted of God. It was, therefore, "an offering of a sweet savor unto the Lord." In addition, he brought his meat offering, which showed his obligation to his fellow man, and offered it likewise through the priest on the brazen altar. It was accepted as an offering of a sweet smell. The result of these two offerings is set forth in the third, the peace offering, in which is shown (God having had his perfect portion in the burnt offering and man his perfect portion in the meat offering) how, where the whole law is fulfilled, both Godward and manward, there is perfect communion and peace. The peace offering, therefore, complements and completes the symbolism of the two former offerings.

We come now to offerings totally different in their character as to method, place, and intent. If the burnt and meat offerings represented the actual facts in the case of man, as they did in the case of Jesus the Antitype of these offerings—that is, if man were perfect in respect of the requirements of both tables of the Law—then there would have been no need of sin and trespass offerings, for there would have been no sin and no trespass. But since man has sinned and failed, both in obedience to God and in his righteous obligation to his fellow man, there must be some way in which he can come to God in peace, else he must forever be excluded from all communion with God and forever bear the curse and wrath of the broken Law. In these two offerings, as in the former three, we see Jesus offering himself in man's stead, here not as a sacrifice for acceptance, "a sacrifice of sweet smell," but, outside the camp, for expiation of sin.

1. *The Sin Offering.* We notice in the first place (*a*) that the sin offered for in this offering is what is called the sin of ignorance, the sin that lies deeper than the human conscience. This is the sin of the nature, that inherent sin of which we are ignorant as a personal act, but which God sees and knows and which is pointed out to us by the Law, and, indeed, may only be thus known. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." It is the sin of the heart out of which proceeds evil thoughts, etc. We constantly hear men saying that they are not responsible for, or conscious of, what is sometimes called Adam's sin or the natural depravity of the nature. But God sees that and has pointed it out to us, and as we get on in the knowledge of God and of self, this sinfulness of nature is oftentimes a deeper grief than that of mere transgression. When David's great sin was brought home to his conscience by the reproof of Nathan

¹ Psalm li, 4.

the prophet, and he came to confession, he perceived that his transgression in the matter of the Hittite was an ultimate consequence of a sinful nature out of which came his wicked transgression. Therefore, he confesses before God that sin: "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."¹ This is, also, what the lament of Jeremiah meant when he said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins."² Of the same John speaks when he says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." This is in contrast to the next verse but one where he says: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."³ This is a distinction everywhere maintained in the Scripture. It is, therefore, for "sin" that Christ, the true Sin Offering, first makes provision. When he was first introduced to the world by the Baptist, it was in these words: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"⁴—not our sins. It is necessary to keep this distinction in mind in order to understand these offerings and rightly to appreciate the perfect work of Christ of which they are the types. (b) It will be noticed that this sin offering was to be made alike for the priest, for the congregation, for the rulers, and for the common people, and for each man severally; showing that, without regard to any known or conscious transgression, all men were sinners, even though they were ignorant of it when tried by the law of conscience. (c) The offering in this case for the priest and the congregation was a young bullock; for a ruler it was a kid of the goats, a male without blemish; for one of the common people it must be a female of either of the goats or of the flock; or, if any were too poor to offer a kid of the goats or of the flock, a turtledove or a handful of fine flour. The living sacrifices were slain and their blood sprinkled before the Lord.

Even when the offering was of flour, the very fact of its being flour shows that it involved suffering or death by means of the grinding. "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." (d) In making this offering the priest, either for himself, for the congregation, or for the individual, ruler, or common man, caused the offerer to place his hands on the head of the victim and there by implication confess and transfer his sin to his "sin offering" or "sin bearer," which was to be slain for him. (e) This offering was slain, but was not burnt upon the brazen altar where the sweet savor offerings were presented, but the carcass was carried "without the camp where the ashes were poured out and burnt with fire on a clean spot of earth." In this we see clearly, in the light of the inspired commentary, what was meant. "For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."⁵ This passage settles the ultimate meaning of the sin offering. (f) The blood of the victim was carried by the high priest and sprinkled before the Lord—that is, seven times before the veil which covered the Holy of Holies. Though the offering was burnt outside the camp to show God's detestation of sin, the blood was offered to God as an atonement for it. (g) That the offering in any case was to be without blemish is the setting forth of the deep and precious truth always preserved in these ceremonies, that when Christ the true Offerer and Offering came he would be a sinless sacrifice, though made to "be sin for us." Had there been so much as a single sinful word or thought in Jesus, he never could have become the sin offering for his people. And yet how solemn it is that, when he went forth outside the camp, his offering sinless, and well beloved as he was, he was not received as one of a sweet smell! On the contrary, as the sin offering of old was cast out as something to be loathed, and hated, and burnt on the ground, so was he. Deserted by friends, surrounded by enemies who heaped every reproach upon him, he was even forsaken by God; hence that bitter and awful cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The answer is: "Because thou art made sin for the people, and as such must bear their shame and reproach as

¹ Psalm li, 5.² Jeremiah xvii, 9, 10.³ I. John i, 8, 10.⁴ John i, 29.⁵ Hebrews xiii, 11, 12.

their penalties, as well as feel the abhorrence of God, who hates sin with a perfect hatred and cannot look upon it." (*h*) In this offering there is no acceptance with God by a sweet smell; there is no meting out of neighborly obligations to man; there is no sweet communion and feeding together as in the peace offering; for here sin was being dealt with. (*i*) The last thing to be noticed in this offering is that all the inward fat was taken away with the kidneys and offered or burnt on the altar of the burnt offering. This may be taken to indicate that the energy, health, and vigor of the whole were offered to God. That is, though the body of the sin offering was burnt without the camp, the person of the sacrifice in himself was accepted of God. Jesus, as the sin offering for his people, was cast out, but he himself was always beloved and accepted of God; and, indeed, the sacrifice which he made for atonement was offered to God, else it would not have availed for us.

2. *The Trespass Offering.* We need not say much about this offering, not because it is of minor importance, but because its characteristic and meaning must be already clearly discerned from a consideration of the other offerings. (*a*) Like the sin offering, it differed from the first three, in that it was not an offering for a sweet smell, because in it we see sin being dealt with, and sin can never come up to God with pleasure and delight. (*b*) We notice that it differs from the sin offering in that it is for sins and not for sin—that is, this offering has to do not with the deep and hidden fountain of sin, but with the outcome of that fountain, with sins, or acts of transgression. These are defined as wrong done to God and wrong done to his neighbor.¹ It has been observed that in this offering no particular notice is taken of the person offering, but of the wrong thing done. In the sin offering we see the person dealt with—the priest, the congregation of Israel, the ruler, and the common person; but in this we have all the emphasis laid on the wrong thing or act done, whether in the matter of the "holy things of the Lord" or in the matter of "violent getting," "deceitful taking," or "swearing falsely about that which is found." It is also remarked that every sinful act or wrong done to one's neighbor is also counted as a wrong done to God. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight," was David's conception of a sinful action. The evil was done against his neighbor, but the sin of it was against God. There it must be atoned for. Jesus not only bore our sin, but he also bore our sins. "He was wounded for our transgressions" and "bruised for our iniquities." He "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." He was "delivered for our offenses." These passages point to sinful acts and atonement made for sins; while it is said that God "made him to be sin for us," and that his soul was made "an offering for sin." (*c*) Practically the same offering was made for trespasses or sins, as was made for sin. As a matter of fact, it was the same and treated in the same way, the whole difference lying in the distinction made between sinfulness of character and sinfulness of action. Both had to be and both were atoned for. (*d*) There is a remarkable addition made in the requirements of the man who offers for trespass, beyond that which is made for sin. The offering for sin recognizes only wrong being while the trespass offering notices wrong doing. There must, therefore, not only be confession and atonement made for wrong doing, but there must be money paid by way of restitution. "He shall even restore it in the principal [that is, the thing in which he has defrauded his neighbor], and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering."² Notice that this restitution has to be made before the trespass offering is brought, and that a fifth part more has to be given. Here is a fine lesson. It is of no use for a transgressor who has wronged his neighbor to go to God for forgiveness, even though he confess his transgression and trespass, without first having made restitution. Zaccheus had learned this lesson. This was the fruit meet for repentance when he declared that if he found he had wronged anyone in the discharge of his duty as a publican, he restored to such an one fourfold.³ It is not straining

¹ Leviticus v, 15-17, 19.

² Leviticus vi, 4, 5.

³ Luke xix, 8; compare Exodus xxii, 1.

the Scriptures, in the light of all that might be brought to bear, to say that when Jesus, in his one offering which he made for us (in which was included all the five offerings), not only made up to God fourfold all the wrong which he had suffered by our sin, but also made up to us a thousandfold all we have suffered at the hands of all sinners. (c) The last remark about this offering is, that no matter what a man's sins and transgressions were, if he brought the trespass offering, "the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord: and it shall be forgiven him for anything of all that he hath done in trespassing therein."¹ How blessed this is! We cannot but turn to our great Trespass Offering and listen to these words. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleaueth us from all sin. . . . If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." For "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."²

Before leaving this subject, we must remind the reader again that these five offerings were five aspects of man's position before God for acceptance; that, it being impossible for him to fulfill these requirements himself, by reason of sin and "weakness of the flesh," he was permitted to do so by offerings, in which he was accounted as accepted. That these offerings, one and all, were fulfilled by Jesus Christ our Lord, as they pointed to him, is clearly seen by reading Hebrews x, in which these are shown to be but shadows, while Jesus is the true substance. As a matter of fact, Jesus has filled every function of these sacrifices or offerings for us, once for all, and by One offering. Yet these many-sided offerings in the ceremonial of Israel enable us to see how many-sided was the sacrifice of Christ. Approaching us from the tabernacle, we see him first as burnt offering, then as meat offering, and then as peace offering—all of which was the picture of his perfect obedience to God, his perfect service to man, and the perfect communion set up thereby. He is now enabled to turn to the sinner and bring him into the tabernacle to have all this holy communion in peace. First, he undertakes by the sin offering to deal with our sinful natures; then by the trespass offering to deal with our sinful actions; and all this he has done for us once for all, and there remaineth, therefore, "no more offering for sin," for the whole case has been met. Therefore, the writer of the Hebrews exhorts his readers, having explained the relation between the types and Christ himself, as follows: "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; . . . let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised."³

It is full of interest, also, to observe that as the sinner approaches God the order of the offerings is reversed. Jesus appeared to us beginning with the burnt offering and ending with the sin and trespass offerings. But in our approach to God we pass back by the way he came. The first thing an awakened sinner feels is the consciousness of his sins, his wrong doings; then he comes to know that wrong doing is the result of wrong being. When these two necessities are met by the blood of Christ, he passes on to communion through the peace offering; then to a high appreciation of his obligations to his brother whom he hath seen, and finally he attains to the rank of sonship when he offers himself to God, whom he hath not seen, in the burnt offering, which is his high and reasonable service.⁴ These are the five foundation offerings. Every Christian and every intelligent student of the Bible should ponder them well.

¹ Leviticus vi, 7.² I. John i, 7, 9, ii, 1.³ Hebrews x, 19-23.⁴ Romans xii, 1-3.

CHAPTER X.

THE SEVEN GREAT FEASTS OF ISRAEL.

THE twenty-third chapter of Leviticus is one of the most interesting and significant in the books of the law, especially in respect of the ceremonial observances of Israel. In addition to the celebration of the sabbath,¹ there are seven great feasts provided for, as follows: The Feast of the Passover;² of Unleavened Bread;³ the First Fruits;⁴ the Pentecost;⁵ the Feast of Trumpets;⁶ the Day of Atonement;⁷ the Feast of Tabernacles.⁸ Beyond these seven, there is the great Year of Jubilee, an account of the establishment and significance of which we find in the twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus. Each of these feasts was deeply significant and had much to do with the development of the religious, social, and national life. They are all highly symbolic of great events and epochs of time in connection with the further unfolding of God's purpose of redemption; and all of them are closely related to some phases of the redemptive work of our Lord. Our space does not permit of a full unfolding of these significant ceremonials, but we shall just glance at them in passing, and must be content with expatiating on the two most important ones, namely, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles. The Atonement is the foundation upon which everything rests as between God and man, and, indeed, between man and man; and the Feast of Tabernacles points to the millennial glory of God's people. After these have been looked at somewhat in detail, we shall refer to the great feast of the Jubilee.

It is scarcely necessary to note in particular the sabbath, which is so well understood as pointing to the final rest of God's people founded on the finished work of Christ and into which "we which believe do enter." Jesus could only give us rest from our sins and all the unrest growing out of them by himself bearing them in his own body on the tree, where he "finished" the new creation and entered into rest through resurrection, as God finished the old creation and rested on the seventh day and hallowed it. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we have a reference to the sabbath which shows its chief symbolic significance so far as we are concerned.⁹

1. *The Feast of the Passover.*¹⁰ This was to commemorate the deliverance of the children of Israel out of the hand of Pharaoh and out of the land of bondage, and from the judgment of God upon sin on the night when the firstborn ones were all slain in Egypt. That it has a special significance to us in Christ is seen in the fact that it was on the night of that feast that our Lord, the true Passover Lamb who was slain for us,¹¹ inaugurated the Lord's Supper, which has ever since taken in the Christian Church the place of the passover feast among the Jews.

2. *The Feast of Unleavened Bread.*¹² This feast followed on the Feast of the Passover, and was designed to set forth the necessity of holiness in the people of God. The unleavened bread—that is bread made without leaven (always the type of sin in the Scriptures)—was the principal article of food during the feast. Reference to this feast, in its symbolic and doctrinal teaching, is seen in the New Testament. "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."¹³

¹ Leviticus xxiii, 3.

² *Ibid*, 5.

³ *Ibid*, 6-8.

⁴ *Ibid*, 9-14.

⁵ *Ibid*, 15-21.

⁶ *Ibid*, 23-25.

⁷ *Ibid*, 26-32.

⁸ *Ibid*, 33-43.

⁹ Hebrews iii, 11-19, iv, 1-11.

¹⁰ Leviticus xxiii, 4-5; compare with Exodus xii.

¹¹ I. Corinthians v, 7.

¹² Leviticus xxiii, 6-8.

¹³ I. Corinthians v, 7, 8; compare Timothy ii, 19.

3. *The Offering of the First Fruits.*¹ In this celebration we have the significant teaching that the harvest about to be gathered and from which a first fruit was taken and waved before the Lord was his bountiful gift, and that the wave sheaf laid up before the Lord was the pledge and guarantee of the forthcoming harvest. Its symbolical reference is to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is a "kind of first fruit" of the people of God, "the firstborn among many brethren," and the "first fruits of them that slept."² This is very beautiful; and just so far as we shall grasp the truth comprehended in it, we shall be always praising God for gathering out from among the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, who in his ascension was waved as a "first fruit" of the great harvest of redeemed men and women who shall be gathered when he comes the second time to gather in his harvest.

4. *The Feast of Pentecost.*³ This feast is also most significant in its symbolism. It was celebrated fifty days after the bringing of the wave sheaf to offer it before the Lord. Symbolically it refers to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the gathering of the Church of Jesus Christ. We read in the second chapter of Acts how the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the disciples and the people and the Church of the Firstborn was gathered in. This was the fulfillment of the feast of pentecost or, as it is sometimes called, the feast of weeks, Pentecost taking place fifty days after the resurrection, or the fulfilled symbol and type of the wave offering of the first fruits. The wave loaves, mixed with leaven, indicating the sinfulness of the people who were gathered into the Church on that occasion, but the lambs without blemish, with the young bullock and two rams, for a burnt offering, and also the kid of the goats for a sin offering, and the two lambs for a sacrifice of peace offering, show how God could and did receive sinners into his Church through the merits of Christ our perfect burnt offering and our sin offering, and bring all into peace. In no other way could a leavened loaf be accepted as a wave offering before the Lord.

5. *The Feast of Trumpets.*⁴ This feast of trumpets, which occurs after a considerable interval following the feast of pentecost and the gleanings of the fields by the poor and the strangers, is believed to point to the final gathering in of the scattered and dispersed—the spiritually blinded and wandering Jews—when the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come with everlasting joy upon their heads, and sorrow and crying shall flee away forever. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy Mount at Jerusalem."⁵ Space does not allow further reference to this significant feast and to the great truth which it points to of God's faithfulness to his ancient covenant people, in preserving them through all their wanderings, and his calling them in at last and returning them to their land, when their iniquity shall be pardoned and they shall receive the double (or title deeds of their ancient possessions) in the land, all through the fountain opened in the house of Israel for all sin and uncleanness.

The next two feasts, those of the great day of atonement and tabernacles, we shall now treat of more at length, as they are much more significant to us as pointing to that which is always present with us—the basis of our reconciliation with God and the coming glory of the Church. In connection with these elaborate ceremonials and feasts, it is only right to remark that it is more than probable that they were not all of them strictly carried out by the Hebrews. What commandment of God is, by men? We know that many of them lapsed and fell entirely into desuetude, and, perhaps, notably the feast of tabernacles, until after the return from Captivity, when it was restored and reestablished with great pomp by Nehemiah. The sabbath, the pentecost, the harvest, and atonement festivals were more or less faithfully kept. The point of view is not so much how faithfully these festivals were kept, but what did God intend they

¹ Leviticus xxiii, 9-14.² I. Corinthians xv, 15-20.³ Leviticus xxiii, 15-21.⁴ Leviticus xxiii, 24, 25.⁵ Isaiah xxvii, 13.

should signify to the Hebrews, and what place they should have in those significant symbolic prophecies which pointed to the coming and the work of Christ our Lord. It is easily seen that almost every phase of our salvation and eternal hope is typified in the offerings and feasts of Israel. The study of these types and shadows of good things to come, in connection with the first ten chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews, will be most helpful and instructive to the thoughtful student of God's Word.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.¹ In each of the first four books of Moses, there is one preëminent chapter in which the very central truth of our redemption is taught. In Genesis, twenty-second chapter, we have an account of the offering of Isaac by Abraham, which surely points to the great sacrifice of Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son. In Exodus, twelfth chapter, we have an account of the slaying of the paschal lamb, whose blood was sprinkled on the door posts and lintels of the Hebrew cottages, and saved them from the destroying angel; which surely points to the great sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is "our Passover, slain for us." In the book before us² we have an account of the institution of the great sacrifice of the day of atonement, in which the central mystery of God's way of putting away sin from his house and from his people is set forth; which, of course, points to the great atonement which our Lord Jesus has made for us once and for all. In Numbers, nineteenth chapter, we have an account of "the waters of purification," and the "ashes of an heifer," which is another most significant type of the power of Christ's blood to purify us from all sin.³

All the ceremonial sacrifices of this and the other books of Moses, and all the subsequent ceremonial observances of the Law by the Jewish people, had a double significance. First, they testified to them the fact of their sin, and their need of atonement and purification; secondly, they pointed typically to the final and complete sacrifice of Christ, who "once in the end of the world . . . appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." The Epistle to the Hebrews is the divine commentary upon all these types and shadows, and ought to be carefully read and compared with the various ceremonials mentioned by Moses in the three books in which he has especially set forth the law of offerings, namely: Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. The ninth and tenth chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews should be carefully studied in this connection.

"The great day of atonement" stood out in unique prominence among all other days in Israel. It had its human occasion in the sin of the sons of Aaron, in offering "strange fire" before the Lord, for which they were immediately slain by him. This account is found in the tenth chapter of Leviticus. Their sin seems to have grown out of an imperfect apprehension of the absolute holiness of God and the necessity of recognizing that fact, and observing all his commandments in reference to approaching him, with punctilious exactness. Immediately thereafter the Lord spake to Moses, and gave him a detailed account of things clean and unclean, both in man and beast, and in inanimate things; and special ceremonial sacrifices and offerings for their cleansing. These directions occupy the five chapters between the tenth and that which contains our present lesson. The great day of atonement was the culmination of these instructions, and was instituted to purge the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the camp and people of all sin and uncleanness which must have accumulated during the year, in spite of all the care which they could possibly take. It points out to us the subtlety and deep-seated character of sin, and shows us that nothing short of an entire covering of sin, by means of atonement, could avail to bring us into the presence of God "without dying." This somewhat lengthy explanation is made necessary by the fragmentary character of our studies in these first books of the Bible.

1. *The Way Into the Holiest.* Referring to the death of Nadab and Abihu,⁴ who lost their lives by carelessly and willfully coming into the presence of the Lord with strange fire,

¹ Leviticus xvi, 1-6, xxiii, 27-32.

² Leviticus xvi.

³ Hebrews ix, 13, 14.

⁴ Leviticus x, 1, 2.



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HIGH PRIEST ENTERING HOLY PLACE.

Moses, at the command of the Lord, forbade Aaron to go into the Holiest of Holies "at all times" or carelessly, lest he, also, should die before the Lord, like his sons. Once a year only must he enter therein, and then only with the "blood of atonement," shed according to minute instructions, together with other observances, to-wit: the special clothing prepared for Aaron, and the burning censer.¹ The careful way in which the holiest of all was guarded and hedged about from the approach even of the high priest, and the fact that even then he might only enter on one day in each year, and that the entire congregation of Israel devoted that day to the observance of this single ceremony, signified to them the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the utter holiness of God, and the certainty of death overtaking any sinner who might essay to come into his presence with any taint of sin upon or about him, either without or within, in connection with priest or people, or even the furniture of the tabernacle and its instruments of worship. To us it signifies that "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest," and points us to Christ, who, "being come an High Priest of good [perfect] things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, . . . by his own blood, entered in once [for all] into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."² The perfection of Christ's atonement was signified to us in this respect by the rending of the veil of the temple on the day of his crucifixion, which tells us that now we may all come "boldly into the presence of God through him." This is most precious to us, and though we are as sinful in ourselves as the most sinful of the Hebrews, yet since Christ has perfectly put away sin and opened up a new and living way for us "through the veil of his flesh," we need now have no fear of "dying before the Lord" when we draw near to him.³

2. *The Atonement for the High Priest.* The ceremony of atonement begins with the atonement ordered and made by the high priest himself. This was because he must offer for the people. But a sinful priest cannot make atonement for a sinful people. Unless he be first free from sin, he may not come into the presence of God, and, therefore, cannot approach God to make atonement for the people. This ceremonial purification of Aaron points us to Christ, who in himself was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," and needed not to make an atonement for his own sins.⁴ We have seen how Christ offered himself as a whole burnt offering in which there was no confession of sin, but an offering accepted on the ground of its perfection as a satisfaction to the holy requirements of God as to righteousness under the Law; and that he might subsequently offer himself as a sin offering to make atonement for us—that is, satisfaction to the justice of God in respect to our sin and transgressions. Aaron had to do more than this, as will be seen in the following particulars.

3. *A Bullock for a Sin Offering.* Aaron must first make acknowledgment of his own sin and that of his house, by offering the prescribed sin offering, and so make atonement.⁵ This purged him from all guilt, and set him justified before God. He was now ceremonially sinless.

4. *A Ram for a Burnt Offering.* Having first purged his own sin, he next appeared before God with a burnt offering, which he offered in token of the entire surrender of himself to God, as was due under the Law, which required the whole and unbroken obedience of man, and also, in token that he gave himself up according to the will of God, as our Lord Jesus did, to become the atoning High Priest for his people, and to make reconciliation for their sins.⁶ In all this we see how, step by step, the high priest took ceremonially and typically the place of Jesus Christ in the great work of atonement.

5. *The Holy Linen Garments.* These, together with the washing of his flesh, are mentioned last—as a matter of fact, they were first in order. Laying aside his garments of "glory," in which he discharged his ordinary daily service, he bathed his flesh in water, and clothed himself in the pure white garments of the common priest, thus in all points making

¹ Leviticus xvi; Hebrews ix, 4.

² Hebrews ix, 8-12.

³ Matthew xxvii, 51; Hebrews vi, 19, x, 20.

⁴ Hebrews vii, 26, 27.

⁵ Leviticus iv, 3.

⁶ Hebrews ii, 17.

himself like unto his brethren. In this attire he proceeded to make atonement for himself, and afterward for the people. This washing and clothing in white was to declare him characteristically, as well as ceremonially, clean—clean as to his flesh, and clean as he stood in the sight of God and men. Only so could he discharge the office of priest for the people on this “great day of atonement.” It is all very beautiful, and, rightly understood, makes the character and work of our Lord Jesus most precious to us.

6. *The Atonement for the People.* Having made atonement for himself, the high priest proceeded to make atonement for the people, which he did in the manner now to be described.

7. *Two Kids of the Goats for a Sin Offering.* These were also first presented at the door of the tabernacle before the Lord. Here we have a perfectly unique sacrifice. The two goats are considered as one in the offering, and the manner in which they are disposed of presents for our contemplation the two great phases of our Savior’s sacrificial death “before the Lord.” These two goats being presented before the Lord, a lot was cast to determine which should stand for the Lord and which for the people. The one upon which the Lord’s lot fell was to be offered to him as a sin offering, in satisfaction to his justice for the sins of the people; while the one which fell to the people was to be “the scapegoat,” to bear away the sin of the people, which the Lord’s goat had already expiated, “into the wilderness,” elsewhere spoken of as the “land of forgetfulness.” This double phase of the atonement is most important, and merits further explanation. (a) *The Lord’s lot.* It is significant that a literal translation of the ninth verse would read thus: “And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the Lord’s lot went up, and shall make it sin.” This is deeply instructive, teaching us that there is, in the matter of atonement, a part which belongs to God only, and which is offered to God only. Sin is a guilty thing, for which satisfaction must be made. This satisfaction is rendered to God. In this transaction man has no part whatever. The blood of atonement is not offered to man, but to God. Here judgment and death are put upon the goat offered to the Lord, and man’s sin is punished and expiated. There are those who would have us believe that there is nothing in the nature or character of God which requires from us any expiation of sin; and, therefore, there is nothing so inherently sinful and guilty that God may not pass it by in simple forgiveness. But we learn from this that God’s holiness and justice require that he should punish sin by judgment and death. This has been done by the one offering which Christ made of himself, “through the eternal Spirit,” for our sin. This is that which he did when “he purged our sin,” before he “sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High.”¹ Let it be clearly understood that sin is something which God must take account of, wholly apart from the question of man’s salvation. Sin must be met and expiated, whether man be saved or not. It is a part of the gracious purpose of God in dealing with man, to give him the benefit of this expiation and provide for his return through the open door of forgiveness in connection with the putting away of sin. Therefore, we are prepared to understand how the expiation of sin by Christ “for the whole world,” and “for every man,” is made efficient for salvation only for those who, through faith and repentance, come back to God. There is no waste in this work of Christ because some do not believe, since it is something done unto God entirely apart from man’s acceptance. God’s glory could not be purged of the affront offered to it until sin had been put away by the amazing sacrifice which Christ accomplished. The punishment of the sinner does not glorify God in this respect, but the work of Christ does. A right understanding of this will clear up many of the popular objections to the atonement as it is objectively considered, or in its Godward aspect. (b) *The people’s lot.* “The goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.”² Here we have man’s side and share in the atonement. This goat was offered to the people as the former one was offered to the Lord. This transaction

¹ Hebrews i, 3, ix, 14.

² Leviticus xvi, 10.

tells us how the sin of the people, which had been expiated by "the Lord's lot," is now carried away into the wilderness by "the people's lot." Beautiful type of that utter forgiveness and forgetfulness of our sin by the Lord whenever we accept his atonement and make it ours! "Be it known unto you therefore men and brethren, that through this man [who was offered up to God as a sin offering] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins [a scapegoat to bear away your sin]: and by him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."¹ If we might imagine any one man of Israel declaring that he would have nothing to do with either the Lord's lot or the people's lot, we should still see that both transactions (which are to be counted as one) would still have gone forward; while the man who repudiated both would be left to bear his own sin as though nothing had been done for him. So it is possible, though Jesus be set forth as the expiation for our sins and forgiveness freely declared through him, that the unbeliever is left for that to come upon him which was declared by the prophets: "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish."²

8. *The Ram for the Burnt Offering.* We merely mention this since it belongs to the atonement for the people, as well as for the priests. The meaning of it has been already explained. It teaches us that not only must our sins be expiated and borne away by the scapegoat, but that every believer is expected, in virtue of his redemption, to offer himself in entire surrender and consecration to God. Forgiveness and justification are not enough. God requires that all his people be a whole burnt offering to him. We need not carry this thought farther.

The Order of the Atonement. Having explained the underlying facts of the great atonement, it is worth our while to look briefly at the order in which it was accomplished.

The High Priest's Atonement. Before attending to the sins of the people, Aaron makes complete atonement for himself. Having cleaved himself and put on his linen garments, he takes his sin offering, and, with its blood, approaches the holiest of all. On the way he takes the golden censer, and, with fire from off the brazen altar, he goes into the holiest of all and burns it before the mercy seat, and sprinkles the blood before the mercy seat seven times.³ This completes his offering. Our Lord is supposed to have passed into the heavens to accomplish this high-priestly function, just after his resurrection and before his appearance to his brethren.⁴ The High Priest was thus first accepted for himself with God.

The People's Atonement. Having completed his own atonement, the high priest next proceeds to make atonement for the people. This he does by first offering the Lord's lot. With the blood of this sin offering he passes into the holiest of all, as he had done before for himself. On his way out he sprinkles the veil, and all the instruments and altars of the tabernacle, to show that the uncleanness which has come upon all things for man's sake must also be put away. Then he comes out, having offered the blood of the Lord's lot to him, and takes the live goat — the scapegoat — and sends him away into the wilderness. This shows us that there can come no forgiveness or putting away of our sin until the question of sin itself has been first thoroughly settled by the sin offering in the person of the Lord's lot. This is a matter well worth our observation and attention, and puts our Lord's sacrificial work and his ministry of forgiveness in its true light before us.

The whole action of the high priest is beautifully summed up in the three appearances of our Lord, referred to in the Epistle to the Hebrews.⁵ First he appears to put away sin, and then passes into the holiest of all to appear in the presence of God for us, that, finally, to those who look and wait for him, he may appear "the second time without sin unto salvation."

¹Acts xiii, 38, 39.²Acts xiii, 41.³Leviticus xvi, 11-14.⁴John xx, 17.⁵Hebrews ix, 24, 26.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

THE book of Leviticus is divided into four parts (see Chapter IX). Our present study lies in the fourth section of this wonderful book and has to do with but one of the holy seasons—the Feast of Tabernacles. It is a part of our embarrassment that there is a very vital and significant connection between all the feasts and holy days, which ought to be carried in one's thought when studying any one of them separately. The same embarrassment met us in attempting to explain and apply the burnt offering, which was but one of five great offerings. In Leviticus, chapter xxiii, we have the account of eight holy days and seasons, inclusive of the sabbath, which has a unique place in Israel's history, and does not properly belong to the enumeration of what are called their "feasts." There are properly seven, as follows: The Feast of the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread (which is joined to the Passover feast), the Feast of the First Fruits, the Feast of Pentecost, the Feast of Trumpets, the Feast of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles. The feast of the passover was properly the first great feast in order, since it celebrated the deliverance from Egypt in connection with the slaying of the paschal lamb. The feast of tabernacles was the last and the "great feast," as it came in the end of the year, after all their fruits were gathered in. This feast is entirely Jewish, and both in its present practical import and in its typical prophecy refers only to them. It is, incidentally, very important to us Gentile Christians, in that it helps us to understand the order of God's purpose in respect to the Jews, and so enables us to understand our relations to that wonderful people, and to find our true place in the great consummation of things when the full typical significance of the feast is seen in its antitypical fulfillment.¹

1. *The Celebration of the Feast.* We have in this chapter (Leviticus xxiii), and in the twenty-ninth chapter of Numbers, almost full details of its celebration. Some details not given in these Scriptures are added by Moses in Deuteronomy, and by Ezra and Nehemiah. For our purpose, however, we shall practically confine ourselves to the text before us.

2. *As to Time and Place.* "The fifteenth day of the seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles." This date corresponds to our month of October. It was the "feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labors out of the field,"² "after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine."³ This should be borne in mind when we come to point out the typical significance of this feast. It was not only the last feast in the year, but the crowning feast in the order of celebrating all the Lord's dealings with Israel. As to the place in which it was celebrated, it is manifest that it was not in the Wilderness, but in the "good land into which the Lord had brought them," though it looks backward to the day in which God brought them out of Egypt, and caused them to dwell in "booths," during the first part of their journeyings in the Wilderness, before they had made for themselves more permanent tents. The time during which this feast lasted was eight days, including the sabbaths on which it began and ended. More properly, it was seven days, since there is reason to believe that the feast proper ended on the seventh day from the first sabbath, the second sabbath marking the termination of the feast by some peculiar rites not observed on the ordinary sabbath.

3. "*Ye shall do no servile work therein.*" This was peculiar to all the feasts. It is eminently proper that, on days and during feasts in which the goodness and grace of God are

¹ Exodus xxiii, 16, xxxiv, 22; Deuteronomy xvi, 13; Ezra iii, 4; Nehemiah viii, 14; John vii, 2, 37.

² Exodus xxiii, 16.

³ Deuteronomy xvi, 13.

commemorated, no servile work should be done. God's people are not given over to servile work. All their work is worship, done in the liberty and freedom which belongs to sons and not to slaves. "We are not under law, but under grace." "The holy service of God's people is not servile labor, but the sweet unfolding of Christ's life and character." Therefore, "for me to live is Christ." This is truly characteristic of all the employments of those of God's people who rightly understand their relation to him through grace. It applies not only to the so-called "religious and spiritual service" done on Sundays or at other times, but to all our labor and employments. "Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do," we do it "unto the Lord," as a joyful expression of our oneness with him, and our deliverance from law and from oppressive care. We do not, indeed, suspend our ordinary occupations when we become Christians, as the Jews did on their sabbaths, but we should carry our sabbath into all our life and work. All time is holy to the Christian, and, therefore, all work is holy. We break the sabbath not in the non-observance of a day, but in the unsanctification of our lives, and in the spirit of our employments and recreations.

4. "*Ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord.*" During the whole seven days and on the eighth day, there was to be special and abundant offerings of the class distinguished by the sweet smell; that is, their feasting and worship were characterized especially by obedience, love to each other, and fellowship—a beautiful type of the condition of life and worship in the millennial time, of which this feast was typical, as we shall see presently. In the account of the offerings given,¹ we note that on the first day there were thirteen bullocks offered for burnt offering, and on each succeeding day one less, which may signify the gradual disappearance of these offerings or the complete fulfillment of them in the perfect sacrifice to which they pointed. On each day there was one kid offered for a sin offering, which indicates that even among the holiest of God's people and at the holiest of seasons, there is still sin which must be confessed and put away.

5. "*Ye shall take you on the first day the boughs [or fruit] of goodly trees, and branches of palm trees,*" etc. These were both for the purpose of building booths in which they were to dwell during the celebration of this feast in memory of their former pilgrim state, and to remind them of the fact that, though they now dwelt in houses, they were still to regard themselves as pilgrims and strangers, having "here no continuing city." This custom was actually revived by Ezra when the people came back to their land from the long Captivity.² It is a matter of wonder to us that, notwithstanding the explicit commandment given for the celebration of this feast, it was never celebrated—at least not this particular feature of it—from the days of Joshua till after the return from Captivity, as is noted in the Book of Nehemiah, in the passage just referred to. This may indicate typically the great apostasy of the Jews from the faith in their final millennial glory, while as yet they were in the Land of Promise. It was, indeed, revived by Ezra, and the feast continued to be regularly and carefully celebrated down to the days of our Savior's advent on the earth, though latterly with little spiritual understanding. It was probably in imitation of this custom during the feast of tabernacles that the people broke off boughs of trees and strewed them before Jesus as he entered Jerusalem.³ Thus the observance of what is called "Palm Sunday," commemorating our Lord's entry into Jerusalem, a few days before his crucifixion, may be regarded as, in part, an echo of Israel's joyous thanksgiving festival.

6. "*Ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days.*" In this we see the general character of the feast. It was essentially a time of thanksgiving. Neighbors and friends came together who had been parted during the year; and general fellowship and communion were indulged. The abundant harvest was gathered, and all the goodness of the Lord was talked over; in a word, this was a time of thanksgiving in which all Israel participated.

¹ Numbers xxix.² Ezra iii, 4; Nehemiah viii, 14.³ Matthew xxi.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FEAST. We have already anticipated this branch of the subject in some particulars, but it will help us to understand it better, even if we repeat a little of what has been said.

1. *Its Present Significance.* This is seen in the time and occasion of the feast. It was the Jewish thanksgiving festival. The ground, under the blessing of the Lord, had brought forth plentifully. They had gathered in their corn, their wine, and all the fruits of the field. Their time of hard labor had passed, and they were made secure in basket and store. It was meet that they should set apart a time in which to recognize the good hand of God, who had fulfilled his promises to them in the land which he had given them. Nothing is, or can be, of more practical value to any people than the practice of grateful thanksgiving to God. It reminds them that the supply for their need comes from God, and not from their own toil alone; and thus prevents pride of heart and selfishness of conduct. It turns their thoughts away, for awhile, from sordid occupations and "servile work," and lifts up their hearts to the thought of better and higher joys than those which come from mere possession. Their feasting, and visiting, and mutual congratulations served to bind the Israelites together alike in family, national, and spiritual bonds. The weakness of most of our lives is seen in the barrenness of our hearts in gratitude and thanksgiving to God, and in the lack of spiritual feasting and fellowship one with another.

2. *Its Retrospective Significance.* "That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt." The Israelites were taught here how God had dealt with them in the past, and how his providences had led them up to present blessing and affluence. It also reminded them that, though they were now in the enjoyment of earth's richest blessings, they were not of the earth, earthly; but were, in fact, pilgrims and strangers looking forward to a better country, even an heavenly; and must not allow themselves to be bound too fast to the earth, or fixed too permanently in "houses made with hands."

3. *Its Typical Significance.* In this regard we see its highest meaning. There is no doubt that this great feast pointed to a time and a condition of things which has not as yet been realized by the Jews as a people. In order to understand this, we must take at least a brief glance at three other feasts mentioned in the chapter before us, and note how they have been fulfilled as to their typical meaning. First: The Passover Feast undoubtedly pointed to the coming into the world of Jesus Christ, who fulfilled in himself the prophecy of the paschal lamb which was the foundation of that feast. As the children of Israel were delivered from the bondage of Egypt by the shedding of the blood of their passover lamb, so have we and they been delivered from the corruption and bondage of sin by the slaying of "Christ our Passover."¹ Secondly: The Feast of the First Fruits. "Then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it."² This was typical of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus, which occurred "on the morrow after the sabbath." Christ is the First Fruit of the great harvest of resurrection and of the ingathering of his people.³ There can be little doubt of this in the mind of the thoughtful and careful student of God's blessed Word. Thirdly: The Feast of Pentecost. This occurred just fifty days after the Feast of the First Fruits. Just so, on the fiftieth day after the resurrection of our Lord, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost was poured out and the great harvest of his people began to be gathered in. That work is still going on, and will continue through the preaching of the Gospel until the whole harvest is gathered. Then will roll in the great feast of tabernacles, when all the remnant of God's ancient people will be gathered in. Thus the feast under consideration points to the "restitution of things," when the "times of refreshing shall come

¹ I. Corinthians v, 7.

² Leviticus xxiii, 10, 11.

³ I. Corinthians xv, 23; James i, 18.

from the presence of the Lord"; when God shall send Jesus "whom the heaven must receive" until then.¹ It is undoubtedly the feast that typifies the millennial reign of the Jews on the earth—a view that is still further strengthened when we remember that there was a great apostasy of the Jews from the observance of the feast, from the days of Joshua until the time of Ezra, when a little remnant of God's people returned from their long Captivity. It was then that, in reading the Law, the commandment concerning this feast was discovered, and the feast restored with great joy.² If there remains any doubt in the minds of any as to this typical reference, they need only to turn to the Book of Zechariah, where we have a glimpse of Israel in future millennial glory and power. "And . . . every one that is left of all the nations shall go up every year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."³ We have not dared, in our attempt to expound this important passage of Scripture, to follow the beaten paths of the "spiritualizers," and cover out of sight what we believe to be the true meaning of the Spirit in this matter. We know that those who are wise in the Scriptures will see the truth and rejoice, and can only pray that thoughtful students who have not as yet seen this truth may be persuaded to "search the Scriptures" and see "if these things be so." In the meantime, for ourselves, we will keep this feast in our hearts for the sake of "the brethren of the Lord" who are at this time dispersed "with the veil over their hearts," but who shall at last come to see and acknowledge their rejected Messiah and King, and with everlasting joy enter again into their land, evermore to keep the feast of tabernacles in millennial glory and power.

CHAPTER XII.

THE YEAR OF JUBILEE.

IN many respects the Year of Jubilee was the most remarkable and significant civil and religious institution of the Hebrew people. A careful reading of the twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus cannot but impress every reader with the wonderful wisdom and divine goodness manifested in the law of the Jubilee. The Lord commanded that, upon entering upon their possessions in the land which he gave them, they were to observe first the sabbath day; but besides this they were to observe a sabbatic year—that is every seventh year the land was to rest; neither sowing, nor planting, nor reaping, nor gathering was allowed. The land must rest. If there was a doubt as to how the people were to survive without one whole year's produce from the land, the Lord comforted and reassured them as follows: "And if ye shall say, what shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase: Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years. And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat yet of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits shall come in ye shall eat of the old store."⁴ Here is a wonderful provision made for those who serve and obey the Lord. Man is always asking: "What shall we do?" and God is always saying to them who trust him: "I will command my blessing." God sets his blessing over against man's need and nature's inability. He is able to do much more for us than we ask or think. Nature is not our sole provider. God is over and above nature. By herself nature is a bountiful mother, but when God commands his blessing upon nature there will be wonderful increase. Early in their history God taught his people that he was the Almighty and that he could do for them through nature what nature could not do without

¹ Acts iii, 19-21.

² Nehemiah viii, 14-18.

³ Zechariah xiv, 16-19.

⁴ Leviticus xxv, 20-22.

his quickening. Nature could not bring forth a son to Abraham and Sarah in their old age, but God is greater than nature and at his word nature wrought through him that was as good as dead, and her who was barren, and gave them the Son of Promise. They that are in the way of God's commandments need not fear for either the famine or the pestilence.

The jubilee year was the fiftieth year from the first celebration of the day of atonement after they entered into the land—a complete round of seven sabbatical year periods. The year was ushered in with the sound of the trumpets which were blown just as the atonement was completed, and with that blast the whole land of Israel awakened with joy. We can well imagine the scene and the unspeakable gladness. For fifty years man had been getting his affairs into disorder. The poor and unthrifty had lost their lands and patrimony; some were deeply in debt; others were sold into bondage; families were separated by these unhappy circumstances. The thrifty were growing more rich, having bought the land of their poorer neighbors and taken their service in lieu of moneys borrowed and not paid; but God was over all. He had said: "The land shall not be sold forever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me."¹ As soon as the priest ministering at the atonement had finished the offering and came forth and blessed the people, the trumpet was placed to his lips, and liberty was proclaimed "throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."² This first bugle blast and proclamation of liberty was taken up by the Levites and spread from hilltop to hilltop, until the sound of the glad jubilee was quickly sent throughout the land. All prison houses were opened, all debtors were set free, all slaves, save those of the bored ear, returned to their families; and all men who had parted with their possessions were privileged to return to them, and did so return. Everything was set in order according to God's mind. It is difficult to conceive of any provision so complete as that made by the Jubilee for the straightening out of crooked things and the righting of all wrong things; for bringing order out of the confusion created by the thriftlessness and sinfulness of some men and the greed and overreaching avarice of others.

1. *The chief feature of the jubilee was its association with the atonement.* "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land."³ It is the atonement which is the basis for the settlement of all things which have gone wrong, both as between God and man, and man and man. Has man sold himself unto sin? Then it is God's blessed atonement which makes it possible for him to proclaim forgiveness for all sin and the deliverance of the soul from the bondage of corruption. Has man gotten all earthly things into confusion and hopeless inequalities, and intentionally or otherwise forfeited his earthly privileges or grasped more than his share? It is the atonement of God which is the basis of settlement for all disputes between man and man. We first learn to prize God's forgiveness of our debts to him, and then we are made willing to forgive all those who are indebted to us. It is only when man is made right with God that he can make things right with his fellowman.

2. *The jubilee was also intimately connected with the Sabbath of the Lord.* The Jubilee Year was a sabbatic year. It tells us that we shall not always toil and sweat for our bread, but that God has a sabbath in store for us. Here, again, it is the finished work of Christ which constitutes the true atonement and brings in rest to us, so that "we which have believed do enter into rest."⁴ Moreover, the land itself, which is to share in the final restitution of all things, rested in the jubilee as a foretaste of the time when its fair bosom shall no longer be torn by the plow or pierced by the spade; when the fields and the vineyards shall bear in their season, without the pruning and cutting which goes on now.

3. *The poor and unfortunate and sinful were redeemed out of all their trouble and took*

¹ Leviticus xxv, 23.

² Leviticus xxv, 10.

³ Leviticus xxv, 9.

⁴ Hebrews iv, 3.

their places as the Lord's freemen, upon their own patrimony and in their own homesteads, and thus were not disgraced but dignified by the jubilee deliverance.

4. *The rich were taught that God stood between them and the poor*, and was the redeemer of such as had need, and that the land was the Lord's and not man's; and further, that he would not allow any one man permanently to take advantage of any other one man's misfortune. In a word, the rich were reminded that the poor and unfortunate and afflicted had rights which they were bound to respect. It was also a great lesson in moderation to the grasping. They could not get possession of the land permanently. However they may have added field to field and house to house, at the jubilee they had to relax their grasp and be content with their own patrimony.

5. *That God's grace and mercy were over all* was another teaching of the Year of Jubilee. God was man's redeemer and friend, and, in due time, would right all wrongs. He was the redeemer and friend of the poor, but none the less also of the rich, for by the same token with which he protected the poor he also saved the rich from making shipwreck of faith and from falling into the temptations and snares which overtake so many rich men.

6. *The Year of Jubilee shows us how superior God's day is to man's day*. All values were regulated by that day. If a man bought a piece of land the first year after jubilee, it was worth only what he might produce in the next forty-nine years. If bought the year before the jubilee, it was worth only its products for one year. And so of service from slaves and value from money lent.

7. *The significance of the jubilee, prophetically, to the Jews* was very great. It pointed to the time when the whole Hebrew people would be, as it were, banished ones, even as they are to-day; driven from their possessions in the land which the Lord their God gave them and scattered among the nations. Not only are they banished from their land, but the land is in the hands of aliens and strangers. But this is not forever. The land is the Lord's and the Jewish people are his tenants forever. Therefore, the time will come when the trumpet shall sound throughout the world and his banished ones shall hear the sound and shall return again to their own land. This is the burden of all prophecy.¹

8. *The typical significance of the jubilee in respect of the Gospel*. The blowing of the jubilee trumpet upon the finishing of the atonement is nothing less than the sounding forth of the Gospel throughout the whole world upon the finishing of the great work of atonement by Jesus. In the beautiful sixty-first chapter of Isaiah, the prophet makes the coming Messiah to say "the Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable [forgiveness, or jubilee] year of the Lord." This passage Jesus appropriated to himself and said it was that day fulfilled in the hearts of the people to whom he preached the glad tidings.² His commission to preach the Gospel to every creature was the proclamation of jubilee to the whole world. On the day of pentecost the trumpet was sounded and the captives and the prison-bound, the poor and the penitent, began to go free, and in virtue of this jubilee proclamation the banished ones have been returning all through the long and blessed jubilee time of grace. "Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation [jubilee]."³

9. *The final significance of the jubilee is seen in the restitution of all things*—when the dead shall be brought forth from their prison-houses—the graves—both in the land and in the sea; when the long-parted shall be united, and the earth and the Church, with the converted Jews reclaimed by the coming the second time of Christ, shall rejoice together.⁴

¹ Isaiah xli, lxi; Zechariah ix, etc.

² Luke iv, 16-21.

³ II. Corinthians vi, 2.

⁴ See Acts iii, 19-21; Romans viii, 19-23; I. Corinthians xv; I. Thessalonians iv; II. Peter iii, 13; Revelation xxi; etc.



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For ourselves we might do well to remember and give place in our lives to the lessons of the jubilee—to remember the poor, not to oppress them; to moderate our greed of gain, remembering that the Lord is coming and that the value of all things is regulated by his near approach; and especially to see that we do not suffer our ears to be bored so that at the sound of the Gospel Jubilee we cannot go out with the rest of the sin debtors and prisoners.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CONSTITUTION OF HEBREW SOCIETY.

IT is interesting to note the steady development of the Hebrew people, who came out of Egypt a huge mob of recently released slaves, into a perfectly organized commonwealth or state. Ordinarily, communities are organized about the person of some masterful man who has made himself king or governor by his superior wisdom or his sheer might. Such were the ancient kings and such were the ancient communities. In later times we note that communities have been organized upon some basis of philosophical government in which the rights of men, especially of the upper classes, have been recognized and safeguarded, and the whole constructed on principles of utilitarianism, the greatest good to the greatest number being often urged, not overlooking the preservation of the State in domestic peace and from foreign invasion. The organization of Hebrew society or the Hebrew commonwealth differed from all these, for it was a purely "theocratic" commonwealth. The tabernacle was the visible center of its organization. From the door of the tabernacle all laws were proclaimed, and there, also, all questions at issue between man and man were settled. In that tabernacle and over the mercy seat dwelt the visible "shekinah" of God, who was, in fact, the King of Israel. All the laws of the Hebrews, civil, criminal, domestic, and religious, were promulgated from the throne of Jehovah, and all of them had a direct bearing upon the religious life of the people. All of them had reference to the spiritual and ethical training of the people, and all of them pointed to a higher and more lasting state of existence.

In fact, we may say that Hebrew society was theocratic socialism pure and simple. The tenure of the land, the laws concerning debts, profit, bondsmen, taxes, interest, and all sanitary and dietetic laws were under divine and religious regulation, and all were so constructed as to make for the spiritual welfare of the people. God was "all and in all" not only in the more strictly religious ceremonials, but in the commonest detail of life at home, in the fields, in the market, as well as about the tabernacle.

The land belonged to God and the holder of the land was God's tenant. It seems to have been the purpose of God to promote agricultural and rural life more than city life. This may be seen in the regulations touching the tenure of the land. When Israel was numbered just before entering the land of Canaan, which God had given to them, it was found that there were 600,000 men, exclusive of the Levites. These were not left to go up and possess the land, as it were indiscriminately, as did the Normans when they conquered England. They were put in possession of the land under strict and equal division. Cities were not mentioned in the division, but every man had a portion of land for himself, which was his under divine leasehold. He might not permanently alienate it from himself or his family. For, even if he did sell his land, it was restored to him or to his heirs at the time of the jubilee year. The universal release of land and property at the jubilee did not apply to cities. For in cities, if houses were

sold and were not redeemed within one year, they were alienated forever.¹ The discrimination in favor of the country land, as against the city property, had a tendency to make the land of more value than city property. There was in this law an entailment of land certainly; but the working of the law of entail among the Hebrews was utterly different from the law of entail in England, for instance. In the first place, inasmuch as there could be no permanent alienation of land from one proprietor to another, there could be no extension of estates, and so no class of vast landholders. The whole land was divided into small holdings; the people were kept in comparative pastoral, or, at least, agricultural content, and the modern tendency to gather in cities was avoided.

The tenants of this land of Jehovah paid to him, as it were, a kind of rent in the tithe (to be spoken of more particularly), which went for the maintenance of the public worship of the nation, and for the support of the Levites. Every freeholder of land under this splendid land system was obliged to render military service under his own chief or the head of his tribe.² Thus the agrarian system of the Hebrews tended to the highest cultivation of the land and to promote patriotism, and at the same time kept down internal ambitions and strife for power and provided for the defense of the country against foreign aggression.

With regard to town or city life, the Hebrew genius, or rather the final cause of the Hebrew society, did not encourage it. God's people from the earliest times had never been builders of cities. That employment seems to have been the peculiar prerogative of those who wished to throw off God's yoke, from the days of Cain downward. The earliest account of city building is that of the City of Enoch by Cain, and all the subsequent mention of city building is in connection with the apostate families of the earth, such as Nimrod and his descendants, the Cananites and the Egyptians. Sodom is one of the earliest mentioned cities properly so called, and the story of it is not encouraging for the people of God. Lot, who took up his residence there, escaped "so as by fire" after "vexing his righteous soul" with the wickedness of its inhabitants. It is true that, upon entering the land, the cities which were not destroyed—such as Jericho and others—were occupied by the people. Later on, Jerusalem became the capital of the kingdom, but it was not till after the kingdom of Israel succeeded to the commonwealth proper. The internal government of Jewish cities was vested in a "council of elders, with judges who were required to be priests." Josephus says there were "seven judges with two Levites as officers."³ In the time of Samuel it was his province to go from city to city, to hold a kind of circuit court and to offer sacrifice. Still later, under the kings, further regulations were inaugurated, upon which it is beyond my province to enter. But, all things considered, the safeguarding of the rights of the people was carefully provided for, and the municipal life and government of the cities of Israel might well be followed in our day.

The Levites among the tribes of Israel were set apart for special service about the tabernacle. They were a kind of lay priesthood; not allowed, indeed, to enter the tabernacle proper, but they served in the court and did all the manual labor in connection with the ceremonial law. It was their business to bear the tabernacle furniture from place to place, taking it down and erecting it again. This was the tribe of which Moses and Aaron were distinguished members. Because they were thus set apart for special service, no share in the divided land was given them, since they had other business to occupy them than agricultural pursuits and soldiering. To them, therefore, were given cities in the land to dwell in and a suburban portion of land extending 1,000 cubits from the walls of the city outward round about.⁴ They had forty-eight cities in all. Of these six—three on either side of Jordan—were specially set apart to be "cities of refuge" for the involuntary manslayer, to which he

¹ See Leviticus xxv, 23-37; Numbers xxvi, 33-54, xxxvi; Deuteronomy xv, 1-11.

² Deuteronomy xx, 5; Exodus xviii; Numbers xxxi, 14.

³ Deuteronomy xvi, 18, xix, 17, xxi, 5, 19; Ruth iv, 2.

⁴ Numbers xxxv, 1-8.

might flee from the "avenger of blood" and be safe. The privilege of refuge or sanctuary was extended alike to the stranger and the sojourner in the land, according to that large charity which characterized the Hebrew society. The cities of refuge were Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron, Bezer, Ramoth Gilead, and Golan.¹ The object of these asylums was that the hasty revenge by the avenger of blood—the next of kin to the slain man—might be stayed until the case could be inquired into. Before being admitted to permanent residence the flier from vengeance was subjected to a rigid inquiry. If it was found that the killing had been in malice or with murderous intent, then he was denied asylum and delivered over to the avenger. If it was shown that the killing was by accident or in self-defense, then he was given asylum in the city to which he fled, and a convenient residence assigned him, and he was provided for by the Levites. He was allowed to go about within the 1,000 yards' boundary without fear of the avenger; but if he went beyond these limits, he did so at his own risk. Upon the death of the high priest he was permitted to leave the city under perfect protection of the law and return to his own land. If he should a second time slay a man, he must flee to another city than that one in which he had already once had asylum. It is said by Jewish writers that the roads leading to these six cities, which were well placed so as to be within comparatively easy reach from all parts of the land, were kept in perfect repair, not less than thirty-two cubits broad—that is, forty-six feet—and every inequality on the surface was carefully taken away, so that a runner might not stumble in his flight. The rivers and streams were all bridged, and at every turning of the road there was a clear and largely written sign board marked "*Refuge! Refuge!!*" so that the manslayer might not lose time by inquiry. This is probably the origin of the expression, "He that runs may read."² That is, the letters on the sign post were so large that the runner need not stop to spell it out, but might read it running, or, reading it running, need not stop or stay his flight. Perhaps, also, this suggested the proverb, "I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straightened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble."³ It is not surprising that all readers of the Bible have found in this wise, humane, and just provision for the manslayer in the cities of refuge, a type of Christ and his salvation for sinners. He is accessible to all; there is a highway, the teaching is plain, and the refuge is perfect.

The most perfect arrangements were made for the protection of the health of the people, in ordinances covering personal habits of cleanliness, the removal from their houses and camps of all effete matter that might breed disease, and the careful regulation of their food, especially as to the kinds of animal food which they might eat. Certain kinds of flesh, fish, and birds were prohibited as unclean. The distinction between the clean and unclean was no doubt to a large extent based upon the inherent unfitness of the prohibited kinds for wholesome food. But there was ethical and spiritual teaching in these laws, as well as sanitary protection. Everything pointed to and reminded the people of God's holiness and their own obligations to holiness as the peculiar people of God. These regulations also served to mark them off from the surrounding nations.

The laws in respect of debt and usury were made to prevent the poor and improvident man from becoming the prey of the rich and thrifty, and to restrain the natural tendencies of the strong and prosperous to make gain of their poorer brethren.

Vows were made most sacred. One might not make a vow and break it with impunity. This was both for protection in all transactions between man and God and between man and man, and also to teach the sanctity of one's plighted troth or word.⁴ For details in respect of all these things the Book of Leviticus is especially referred to.

In order that the whole system upon which the Hebrew society was founded may be

¹ Numbers xxxv, 10-34; Joshua xx.

² See Habakkuk ii, 2: "that he may run that readeth it."

³ Proverbs iv, 11, 12.

⁴ Hebrews vi, 16-18.

brought before the reader so classified that it may be seen at a glance the following compendium and analysis is appended.

I.—THE CIVIL LAWS.

A. IN RESPECT OF PERSONS. 1. *The Father and Son.* (a) The power of the father was to be held sacred. Cursing or smiting, and stubborn or willful disobedience on the part of a son was held as a capital crime and punishable by death.¹ But the uncontrolled power of life and death was not absolutely in the hands of the father. It must be sanctioned by the congregation—that is, the ruling elders of the people.² (b) The right of the firstborn to a double portion of the inheritance might not be set aside by mere partiality.³ (c) Inheritance by daughters was to be allowed where there was a default of a son—provided the daughter so inheriting married in her own tribe.⁴ (d) Unmarried daughters were to be entirely dependent on their fathers.⁵ 2. *Husband and Wife.* (a) The power of the husband was so great that the wife could never, by herself, enter independently into any engagement, even before God.⁶ A widow or divorced wife became independent, and did not fall again under her father's authority.⁷ (b) Divorce for unfaithfulness to the marriage relation was allowed, but was formal and irrevocable.⁸ (c) Marriage within certain degrees of relationship was forbidden.⁹ (d) A slave wife, whether bought or a captive, could not be actual property, nor sold; and if ill treated that was *ipso facto* her freedom.¹⁰ (e) Slander against a wife's virginity was punishable by fine and the deprivation of the right of divorce; on the other hand, ante-connubial unchastity on her part was punishable by death.¹¹ (f) The raising up of seed (levirate law), was a formal right to be claimed by the widow, under pain of infamy, with a view to the preservation of families.¹² 3. *Master and Slave.* (a) The power of the master was so far limited that death under actual chastisement was punishable; and maiming was to give liberty.¹³ (b) The Hebrew slave was to be liberated in the sabbatical year, his wife and children to go with him only if they came to his master with him, unless by his own formal act he consented to a perpetual slavery.¹⁴ In any case he was freed at the jubilee with his children.¹⁵ If sold to a resident alien, he was always redeemable at a price in proportion to the distance from the jubilee.¹⁶ (c) Foreign slaves were to be held and inherited as slaves forever,¹⁷ and fugitive slaves from foreign nations were never to be given up.¹⁸ 4. *Strangers seem to have been apart—sui juris—* without law and able to protect themselves; but, and perhaps, therefore, protection, kindness toward them was particularly enjoined as a sacred duty.¹⁹

B. THE LAW OF THINGS. 1. *Of Land and Property.* (a) All land was the property of God and its holders to be deemed his tenants.²⁰ (b) All land sold was to return to its original owners at the jubilee, and the price of sale to be calculated accordingly; and redemption on equitable terms was to be allowed at all times.²¹ (c) A house in a city was redeemable within a year; and if not redeemed within that time passed away forever.²² (d) The houses of the Levites and those dwelling in unwallled villages—farm settlements—were redeemable at all times in the same way as lands; and the Levitical suburbs were inalienable.²³ (e) Houses or land sanctified, or tithes, or unclean firstlings, were capable of being redeemed at five-sixths of their value (calculated, according to the distance from the jubilee year, by the priest); if devoted by the owner and unredeemed, they were to be hallowed at the jubilee forever, and given to the priests; but if devoted only by the possessor, they were to return to the owner at the jubilee.²⁴

¹ Exodus xxi, 15-17; Leviticus xx, 9.

² Deuteronomy xxi, 18-21.

³ Deuteronomy xxi, 15-17; compare Jeremiah xxxiv, 8-16.

⁴ Numbers xxvii, 6-8; compare xxxvi.

⁵ Numbers xxx, 3-5.

⁶ Numbers xxx, 6-15.

⁷ Numbers xxx, 9.

⁸ Deuteronomy xxiv, 1-4.

⁹ Leviticus xviii.

¹⁰ Exodus xxi, 7-9; Deuteronomy xxi, 10-14.

¹¹ Deuteronomy xxii, 13-21.

¹² Deuteronomy xxv, 5-10.

¹³ Exodus xxi, 20, 26, 27.

¹⁴ Exodus xxi, 1-6; Deuteronomy xv, 12-18.

¹⁵ Leviticus xxv, 10.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 45-54.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 45, 46.

¹⁸ Deuteronomy xxiii, 15.

¹⁹ Exodus xxii, 21; Leviticus xix, 33, 34.

²⁰ Leviticus xxv, 23.

²¹ *Ibid*, 25-27.

²² *Ibid*, 29, 30.

²³ *Ibid*, 31-34.

²⁴ Leviticus xxvii, 14-33.

(f) Inheritance was in the following order of succession: (i) Sons. (ii) Daughters. (iii) Brothers. (iv) Uncles on the father's side. (v) Next kinsman, generally.

2. *Laws of Debt.* (a) All debts of an Israelite were to be released at the seventh (sabbatical) year; a blessing was promised to obedience and a curse on refusal to lend.¹ (b) Usury, from Israelites, was not to be taken.² (c) Pledges were not to be insolently or ruinously exacted.³

3. *Taxation.* (a) Census-money, a poll tax of half a shekel, was to be paid for the service of the tabernacle.⁴ (b) All spoils in war were to be halved: of the combatants' half, one five-thousandth; of the peoples', one-fiftieth; to be paid for a heave offering for Jehovah. (c) Tithes of all produce were to be given for the maintenance of the Levites.⁵ Of this one-tenth was to be paid as a heave offering for the maintenance of the priests.⁶ A second tithe was to be bestowed in feasting and religious charity, either at the holy place or every third year at home.⁷ (d) First fruit of corn, wine, and oil, at least one-sixtieth—generally one-fortieth for the priests—was to be offered at Jerusalem, together with a solemn declaration of dependence upon God, the King of Israel.⁸ Firstlings of clean beasts, the redemption money (five shekels) of a man, and (one-half shekel or one shekel) of unclean beasts, were to be given to the priests after sacrifice.⁹ (e) For the poor. (i) Gleanings in the field or vineyard, were to be the legal right of the poor.¹⁰ (ii) Slight trespass, to be eaten on the spot, was to be allowed.¹¹ (iii) The second tithe was to be given in charity (see above). (iv) Wages were to be paid daily.¹² (f) Maintenance of the priests.¹³ (i) One-tenth of Levites' tithes (see above). (ii) The heave and wave offering—breast and right shoulder of all peace offerings. (iii) The meat and sin offering were to be eaten solemnly in the holy place. (iv) First fruit and redemption money (see above). (v) Price of all devoted things, unless given for special service. A man's service or that of his household was to be redeemed at 50 shekels for a man, 30 for a woman, 20 for a boy, and 10 for a girl.

II.—CRIMINAL LAWS.

A. OFFENSES AGAINST GOD (of the nature of treason). 1. *Acknowledgment of false gods*,¹⁴ as, *e. g.*, Moloch,¹⁵ and generally all idolatry.¹⁶ 2. *Witchcraft* and false prophecy.¹⁷ 3. *Blasphemy*.¹⁸ 4. *Sabbath breaking*.¹⁹ The punishment in all these cases was death by stoning. Idolatrous cities were to be utterly destroyed.

B. OFFENSES AGAINST MAN. 1. *Impiety toward parents*,²⁰ was to be punished by death, by stoning, to be publicly adjudged and inflicted; also disobedience to priests (as judges) or Supreme Judge.²¹ 2. *Murder* was to be punished by death, without sanctuary, or reprieve or satisfaction.²² (i) Death of a slave actually under the rod was to be punished.²³ (ii) Death by negligence was punishable by death.²⁴ (iii) Accidental homicide. The avenger of blood was to be escaped by flight to the cities of refuge till the death of the high priest.²⁵ (iv) Uncertain murder was to be expiated by disavowal and sacrifices by the elders of the nearest city.²⁶ (v) Assault was to be punished by *lex talionis*, or damages.²⁷ 3. *Adultery* was punishable by death of both offenders; the rape of a married or betrothed woman by death of the offender.²⁸ (ii) The rape or seduction of an unbetrothed virgin was to be compensated by marriage, with

¹ Deuteronomy xv, 1-11.

² Exodus xxii, 25-27; Deuteronomy xxiii, 19-20.

³ Deuteronomy xxiv, 6, 10-13, 17, 18.

⁴ Exodus xxx, 12-16.

⁵ Numbers xviii, 18-24.

⁶ *Ibid*, 24-32.

⁷ Deuteronomy xiv, 22-28.

⁸ Deuteronomy xxvi, 1-15; Numbers xviii, 12-13.

⁹ Numbers xviii, 15-18.

¹⁰ Leviticus xix, 9-10; Deuteronomy xxiv, 19-22.

¹¹ Deuteronomy xxiii, 24, 25.

¹² Deuteronomy xxiv, 15.

¹³ Numbers xviii, 8-31.

¹⁴ Exodus xxii, 20.

¹⁵ Leviticus xx, 1-5.

¹⁶ Deuteronomy xiii, xvii, 2-5.

¹⁷ Exodus xxii, 18; Deuteronomy xviii, 9-22; Leviticus xix, 31.

¹⁸ Leviticus xxiv, 15-16.

¹⁹ Numbers xv, 32-36.

²⁰ Exodus xxi, 15-17; Leviticus xx, 9; Deuteronomy xxi, 18-21.

²¹ Compare I. Kings xxi, 10-14; II. Chronicles xxiv, 21.

²² Exodus xxi, 12-14; Deuteronomy xix, 11-13.

²³ Exodus xxi, 20, 21.

²⁴ Exodus xxi, 28, 30.

²⁵ Numbers xxxv, 9-28; Deuteronomy iv, 41-43; xix, 4-10.

²⁶ Deuteronomy xxi, 1-9.

²⁷ Exodus xxi, 18, 19, 22, 25; Leviticus xxiv, 19, 20.

²⁸ Deuteronomy xxii, 13-27.

dowry—50 shekels—and without power of divorce; or, if she be refused, by payment of full dowry.¹ (iii) Unlawful marriages—incestuous—were to be punished; some by death, some by childlessness.² 4. *Theft* was to be punished by fourfold or double restitution. A nocturnal robber might be slain as an outlaw.³ (ii) Trespass and injury of things lent were to be compensated.⁴ (iii) Perversion of justice—by bribes, threats, etc.—and especially oppression of strangers, were strictly forbidden.⁵ (iv) Kidnapping was punishable by death.⁶ 5. *False witnesses* were to be punished by *lex talionis*;⁷ slander of a wife's chastity, by fine and loss of power of divorce.⁸

III.—LAWS, JUDICIAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL.

A. JUDICIAL. (a) Local judges—generally Levites, as being more skilled in the Law—were appointed for all ordinary matters by the people, with the approbation of the supreme authority (as of Moses in the Wilderness), throughout the land.⁹ (b) Appeal to the priests, at the holy place, or to the judge. Their sentence was final and to be accepted under pain of death.¹⁰ (c) Two witnesses at least were required in capital matters.¹¹ (d) Punishment, except by special command, was to be personal and not to extend to the family.¹² Stripes were allowed but limited,¹³ to avoid outrage on human frame. These regulations were set aside to a great extent in later times under the kings of Israel, and in still later times by the Sanhedrim, as the supreme court of the nation, after the return from Captivity.

B. OF THE ROYAL POWER. This was limited by law as written and formally accepted by the king; and directly forbidden to be despotic;¹⁴ yet he had power of taxation (one-tenth); and of compulsory service;¹⁵ and could declare war.¹⁶ There are distant traces of “mutual contract,” as in the leagues of David¹⁷ and Joash¹⁸ with their people, the remonstrance with Rehoboam being not extraordinary.¹⁹ The princes of the congregation or heads of tribes²⁰ seem to have had authority under Joshua to act for the people; and in later times “the princes of Judah” seem to have controlled both the king and the priests.²¹

IV.—ECCLESIASTICAL AND CEREMONIAL LAW.

A. THE LAWS PERTAINING TO SACRIFICE, considered as the sign and the appointed means of reconciliation and union with God, on which communion with him depended and also as a means to maintaining the holiness of the people.

1. *The ordinary sacrifices*—of which we have fully treated, namely: The burnt offering; the meat offering; the peace offering; the sin and trespass offerings, for sins of trespass and of nature.²²

2. *Extraordinary sacrifices.* (i) At the consecration of the priests.²³ (ii) The purification of women.²⁴ (iii) The cleansing of lepers.²⁵ (iv) On the great day of atonement.²⁶ (v) On the great festivals.²⁷

B. LAWS OF HOLINESS—arising from union with God through sacrifice.

1. *Holiness of persons.* (a) Holiness of the whole people, as “children of God;”²⁸ as shown in: (i) The dedication of the firstborn;²⁹ and the offering of all firstlings and first fruits.³⁰

¹ Exodus xxii, 16, 17; Deuteronomy xxii, 28, 29. ² Leviticus xx. ³ Exodus xxii, 1-4. ⁴ Exodus xxii, 5-15.

⁵ Exodus xxiii, 9, *et seq.* ⁶ Deuteronomy xxiv, 7. ⁷ Exodus xxiii, 1-3; Deuteronomy xix, 16-21.

⁸ Deuteronomy xxii, 13-19. ⁹ Deuteronomy xvi, 18. ¹⁰ Deuteronomy xvii, 8-13; compare Exodus xviii, 26.

¹¹ Numbers xxxv, 30; Deuteronomy xvii, 6, 7. ¹² Deuteronomy xxiv, 16. ¹³ Deuteronomy xxv, 1-3.

¹⁴ Deuteronomy xvii, 14-20; compare I. Samuel x, 25. ¹⁵ I. Samuel viii, 10-18. ¹⁶ I. Samuel xi, 5-7.

¹⁷ II. Samuel v, 3. ¹⁸ II. Kings xi, 17. ¹⁹ I. Kings xii, 1-6. ²⁰ Joshua ix, 15.

²¹ Jeremiah xxvi, 10-24, xxxviii, 4, 5. ²² Leviticus i-vi. ²³ Leviticus viii, ix. ²⁴ Leviticus xii.

²⁵ Leviticus xiii. ²⁶ Leviticus xvi. ²⁷ Leviticus xxiii.

²⁸ Exodus xix, 5, 6; Leviticus xi, xv, xvii, xviii; Deuteronomy xiv, 1-21. ²⁹ Exodus xiii, 2, 12, 13, xxii, 29, 30.

³⁰ Deuteronomy xxvi.

(b) Distinction between clean and unclean food.¹ (c) Provision for purification.² (d) Laws against disfigurement; against excessive scourging.³ (e) Laws against unnatural marriage and lust.⁴

2. *Holiness of Priests and Levites.* (a) Their consecration.⁵ (b) Their special qualifications and restrictions.⁶ (c) Their authority and rights.⁷

3. *Holiness of Places and Things.* (a) The tabernacle, with the ark, the veil, the altar, the laver, the candlesticks, etc., and the priestly robes.⁸ (b) The holy place chosen for the permanent erection of the tabernacle, where only all sacrifices were to be offered, and all tithes, first fruits, vows, etc., to be given or eaten.⁹

4. *Holiness of Times.* (a) The sabbath.¹⁰ (b) The sabbatical year.¹¹ (c) The year of jubilee.¹² (d) The passover.¹³ (e) The feast of weeks—that of pentecost.¹⁴ (f) The feast of tabernacles.¹⁵ (g) The feast of trumpets.¹⁶ (h) The day of atonement.¹⁷

The above is a fair compendium of the various laws—civil, criminal, ecclesiastical—of the Hebrew people. It will be seen how full and comprehensive they are, and especially how they all tend to holiness of life, obedience to God, and all righteousness toward men. It is not surprising that many of the laws of the Hebrew people survive on our own statute books to this day, nothing so good or complete having ever been devised by man.

¹ Leviticus xi; Deuteronomy xiv.

² Leviticus xii-xv; Deuteronomy xxiii, 1-14.

³ Leviticus xix, 27; Deuteronomy xiv, 1, xxv, 1-3.

⁴ Leviticus xviii, xx.

⁵ Exodus xxix; Leviticus viii, ix.

⁶ Leviticus xxi, xxii, 1-9.

⁷ Numbers xviii; Deuteronomy xvii, 1-6, 8-13.

⁸ Exodus xxv-xxviii, xxx.

⁹ Numbers xviii.

¹⁰ Exodus xx, 9-11, xxiii, 12.

¹¹ Exodus xxiii, 10, 11; Leviticus xxv, 1-7.

¹² Leviticus xxv, 8-16.

¹³ Exodus xii, 3-27, xiii, 4-16.

¹⁴ Leviticus xxiii, 15, etc.

¹⁵ Leviticus xxiii, 33-43.

¹⁶ Leviticus xxiii, 23-25.

¹⁷ Leviticus xxiii, 26-32, etc.

W. F. Paulson
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ANCIENT CEDARS OF LEBANON.

BOOK VI.

FROM THE INVASION OF CANAAN TO THE LAST OF THE JUDGES.

BY

✓
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BOOK VI.

FROM THE INVASION OF CANAAN TO THE LAST OF THE JUDGES.

CHAPTER I.

THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN.

THE conquest of Canaan marks a new era in the history of civilization and religion. It was a conquest not only for Israel, but also for humanity. It was a turning point in the history of our race; it was the triumph of civilization over barbarism, and of true religion over a gross heathenism. Every intelligent student of history must be interested in a chapter so replete with instruction and warning as the story of the conquest of Palestine. It is true that in this history we are brought into a more secular and human atmosphere than that which prevails in most parts of the Bible; still all history is sacred history to the devout believer, and it ought to be equally so to the philosophical student. The distinction between profane and sacred history is imaginary and not real. God's hand is never withdrawn from the affairs of men; at certain times its presence may be more marked than at others, but whether seen by us or not it is ever present, moving armies, controlling nations, and governing empires for the glory of God and for the good of men. Rightly understood, all things are tending toward the triumph of truth and the establishment of righteousness. Before the advent of Christ all events converged toward his coming, and since that coming all have diverged from his cradle and his cross. Christ's advent is the pivotal point around which all historical events revolve in smaller or larger orbits. There ought, therefore, to be no unwillingness to use such a phrase as "The Conquest of Palestine"; for while it is true that in studying this subject we are concerned with the conquest of a country only a little larger than the State of New Hampshire, and a little larger than Wales, and only about one-third the size of Scotland, still its conquest was a most important part of a great human and divine movement for uplifting the nations of the earth. We, therefore, utterly miss the meaning of this invasion if we think of it as only one of many migrations from one country to another. That element it possessed, for those who were displaced by the Israelites had once themselves been invaders and had displaced still earlier invaders; but this conquest is unique among the great providential movements in the world's history.

The old race of "giants,"¹ comes to us from the dim light of primæval ages. Doubtless the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites had united with the Philistines to invade and largely to destroy former populations; then came the Israelites; and the land was afterward invaded by Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Crusaders, French, and English;² and perhaps other invasions may yet take place. But the conquest of Canaan by Joshua had a larger purpose and a wider influence than such invasions as we have just named.

¹ Deuteronomy ii, 20; Joshua xiii, 12.

² Introduction to Joshua in "Pulpit Commentary."

In this purpose and influence this conquest stands quite alone. Like some of the invasions made later, it was the fulfillment of divine prophecy, the infliction of threatened punishment, and the bestowal of promised blessing. The victories of Joshua, furthermore, are types and prophecies of still greater spiritual blessings which God had promised to his chosen people. Not to have this larger view of this conquest is to miss its most significant lessons. He is but a prejudiced student of history who refuses to recognize the purpose of the Almighty in the invasion made by Joshua.

There were several stages in the conquest of Palestine. Strictly speaking, the beginning of this conquest extended beyond the time of Joshua; it began when the passage of the brook Zered was accomplished under the leadership of Moses.¹ The final conquest was not made until hundreds of years after, when David entered Jerusalem in triumph.² But we may with propriety speak of the conquest in connection with the territory afterward known as Palestine, when it became, in a general sense, subject to Joshua. The first stage in this conquest was the occupation of the district east of the Jordan; then came the victories over the original inhabitants on the western side of the river, covering its three great divisions, the valley of the Jordan, the southern and central mountains, later known as Judea and Samaria, and the northern mountains, finally known as Galilee.³ The conquest of eastern Palestine prepared the way for crossing the river and winning victories on the western shore. The territory east of the Jordan has always been romantic, beautiful, and mysterious. On that side lived portions of the aboriginal race, under the name of "Emim" and "Zamzummin," or simply "Zuzim."⁴ These aboriginal tribes were once expelled by the tribes of Moab and Ammon, and they, in turn, were dispossessed by two Canaanitish chiefs, who manifested much ambition and acquired much power.⁵

The approaching Israelites were preceded by thrilling stories of God's dealings with them and of his promises on their behalf. Their attack on the Canaanitish kings was assisted by immense swarms of hornets which, though never uncommon in Palestine,⁶ seemed to have been miraculously multiplied and employed on this occasion.⁷ The rough mountaineers were forced by the hornets into the plains, and there the conflict began, and there the victory was won. Sihon, who occupied the district between the Arnon and Jabbok, having wrested it from Balak's predecessor, had established himself at Heshbon.⁸ The victory over him was duly celebrated in a thrilling war song, which was often sung in later times as illustrative of power and bravery on the part of God's people.⁹ At Jahaz, near the rich pastures of Moab, the decisive battle was fought.¹⁰ There the slingers and archers of Israel displayed wonderful valor, matched by corresponding skill. Sihon was overthrown, the army retreated, and, seeking to stay its thirst, was finally destroyed in the bed of a mountain stream.¹¹

Long did the memory of the contrast between the former glory and the present defeat of the great chief survive in the triumphant songs of Israel. The five Arabian chiefs of the tribe of Midian, who had been the vassals of Sihon, urged the king of Moab to destroy the invaders by the curse of Balaam; but he was powerless to accomplish their wish.¹² But the licentious rites of the Midianites were likely to lead the people of God into degrading forms of sin. They were, however, saved by the sacred war headed by the priest Phinehas.¹³ The Ark was brought out, a blast from the sacred trumpet was heard, and the people were religiously aroused. The chiefs of Midian were slain, and the mysterious prophet shared their fate.¹⁴ Their pastoral possessions became the property of the conquerors, much wealth in gold and oxen, sheep and asses was secured, and, in harmony with the customs of war at the time, a terrible

¹ Deuteronomy ii, 13.² II. Samuel v, 6, 7.³ Stanley, "Jewish Church," I, p. 230.⁴ Deuteronomy ii, 10.⁵ Stanley, "Jewish Church," I, Lecture IX.⁶ Deuteronomy i, 44.⁷ Exodus xxiii, 28.⁸ Numbers xxi, 26; Joshua xii, 2, 3.⁹ Numbers xxi, 27, *et seq.*¹⁰ Numbers xxi, 23.¹¹ Josephus, "Antiquities," IV, v.¹² Numbers xxii.¹³ Numbers xxxi, 6-8.¹⁴ *Ibid.*



ELIM.

slaughter of the conquered tribe took place. It is thought that about this time Rameses III.,¹ of Egypt, made an incursion into Canaan, and thus Sihon was prevented from obtaining help from his kinsmen on the west of the Jordan.² On marched the triumphant hosts toward the Jordan. Soon Og, the king of a territory extending from the Jabbok to the base of Hermon, was attacked by the invaders. His "iron bedstead," whatever this was, was carried off by the Ammonites as their trophy, and soon the whole country, part of which was known then and afterward as Gilead, with its walled and fortified cities, was in possession of Israel, while other chiefs and tribes also fell before their resistless power.³

The tribes of Reuben and Gad were nomadic to a marked degree. They possessed a great multitude of cattle, and so desired the land east of the Jordan as their territory. These tribes never entirely threw off the peculiarities of their patriarchal ancestors. They divided the kingdom of Sihon between them, thus occupying the territory between the Arnon and the Jabbok, and the eastern side of the Jordan valley all the way up to the Sea of Galilee.⁴ Reuben was strictly pastoral, and his tribe rendered but little aid in the struggles of the nation. "Unstable as water,"⁵ he could not excel, and finally he vanished away like any desert tribe. In the song of Deborah bitter complaints were uttered against him for his indifference,⁶ if not cowardice. Gad occupied the forest region south of the Jabbok.⁷ From his tribe came the eleven valiant chiefs who crossed the Jordan in floodtime to assist the outlawed David.⁸ They were swift as gazelles, and they were fierce as lions.⁹ Manasseh on the eastern side, like their brethren on the western shore, possessed something of the pastoral character of Reuben and Gad, but had also a genuinely martial spirit. We might well expect a separation to occur between these pastoral tribes and those who crossed the Jordan; such a controversy was almost inevitable, and traces of it are found constantly in their history. The connection with the rest of the nation, however, was never entirely broken. Their territory was most congenial to these pastoral peoples. It is often described because of its fitness for the support of flocks and for its beauty and fertility. This land was often a place of refuge. It is wild, poetic, and mysterious; and it is immortalized in thrilling psalms and romantic histories.

There were inducements for the Israelites to remain on the eastern side of the Jordan; but had they so done, the whole history of Judaism, of civilization, and of Christianity would have been changed. Under the impulse of their high destiny, they pressed forward; they were as certainly drawn from the eastern to the western side as was Abraham from Mesopotamia, or Moses from Egypt.¹⁰ They were now to be transformed from a nomadic to a settled people; from pastoral tribes to agricultural communities. They were to send out their influence to the western world, and to have their part in the great theater of progress to the end of time. Had they yielded to the charms of the fertile valleys and rugged hills on the eastern side of the Jordan, they would have missed their great opportunity; they would have remained insignificant tribes, instead of becoming a mighty people; they might all have been, like Reuben, "unstable as water."

It is fitting at this point that we get a definite idea of the land to be conquered. It has been known at various periods by different names. Sometimes it has been called "The Land of Canaan," from the original settler, Canaan, the fourth son of Ham, who divided it among his eleven sons,¹¹ and each of whom became finally the head of a distinct people. The name Canaan applied especially to the country west of the Jordan,¹² and was opposed to "The Land of Gilead" on the east. It has also been called "The Land of Promise," because of the promise given to Abraham that it should be possessed by his posterity.¹³ It has also been known as "The Land of the Hebrew," as the descendants of Abraham were called Hebrews, the word

¹ "Bible for Learners," I, 328.

² "Bible for Learners," Drs. Oort, Hooykaas and Kuenen, Vol. I, p. 328.

³ Numbers xxi, 33-35.

⁴ Stanley, "Jewish Church," I, pp. 241, 242.

⁵ Genesis xlix, 4.

⁶ Judges v, 15.

⁷ Joshua xiii, 24.

⁸ I. Chronicles xii, 14.

⁹ I. Chronicles xii, 8.

¹⁰ Stanley, "Jewish Church," I, p. 250.

¹¹ Genesis x, 15-18.

¹² Numbers xxxii, 32.

¹³ Genesis xii, 7.



PLAIN OF ESDRAELON.

"Hebrew" meaning "crossed over," and applied by the Canaanites to Abraham upon his crossing the Euphrates; or perhaps the word came from Eber, the last of the long-lived patriarchs. Sometimes it was named "The Land of Israel," from the Israelites or posterity of Jacob who there found a home. This name occurs frequently in the Old Testament; it included at one time the tract of ground on both sides of the Jordan given by God to the Hebrews for an inheritance. Later, however, the term was often restricted to the territory occupied by the ten tribes. It is also called "The Land of Judah." This title originally was limited to the territory occupied by the tribe of Judah; but after the separation of the ten tribes "The Land of Judah" included the territories which belonged both to Judah and Benjamin; and the whole country, even that beyond Jordan, retained this name even under the dominion of the Romans. "The Holy Land" is a name which seems to have been used by the Hebrews during and after their captivity in Babylon. This name, "Terra Sancta," or "Holy Land," was the most common one throughout the Middle Ages. The name "Palestine," or the land of the immigrant, was derived from the Philistines, who probably came from Egypt and expelled the aboriginal inhabitants, and then settled on the shores of the Mediterranean. This name was finally given to all the country, although they never really were its masters. Heathen writers have variously used the names Palestine, Syria, and Phœnicia. The population increased so that probably it was not less than 5,000,000 in the most prosperous times in the history of Israel. Canaan was bounded on the west by the Mediterranean Sea, on the north by the high ranges of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, on the east by Arabia Deserta, and on the south by Edom and the desert of Zin and Paran. These boundaries may be differently described according to the nomenclature which may be chosen. The size of the country varied at different times; but its extreme length seems to have been about 140 to 180 miles, and its average width from 40 to 60 miles. It contained an area of nearly 11,500 square miles, more or less, according to the changes in its boundaries. It lay on the extreme western edge of the East. Asia seemed to have rejected this strip of land, impassable deserts separating it from Mesopotamia and Arabia. It lies on the shore of the Mediterranean, as if waiting to send out its influences to the new world. It became the highway for communication between Egypt and Assyria. Like the Netherlands in Europe, it was the arena on which for successive ages hostile powers fought their battles and contended for the control of vast empires. It lay in the center of the great countries of antiquity, and yet was remarkably isolated. In area and conformation, the country has been frequently compared to the State of New Hampshire. "Along the shore of the Mediterranean run the Shephelah and the Maritime Plain, broken only by the bold spur of Mount Carmel; parallel to this is a long range of hills; . . . beyond the Jordan valley runs the straight, unbroken, purple line of the mountains of Moab and Gilead. The country from north to south may be represented by four parallel bands—the seaboard, the hill country, the Jordan valley, and the transjordanic range."¹ Few countries are more beautifully diversified than Canaan, with its mountains, plains, rivers, and valleys. It is essentially a mountainous country; its principal mountains are Lebanon, Carmel, Tabor, Gilead, Hermon, and the Mount of Olives. The plains of the Mediterranean, of Esdraelon, and of Jericho are associated with historic events of the greatest importance. The chief rivers are the Jordan, the Leontes, the Arnon, the Sihor, the Jabbok, and the Kishon. The lakes or seas are the Dead Sea, the Sea of Galilee, and Lake Merom. At the northern boundary are the lofty peaks of Lebanon and Hermon. At the base of Hermon are the sources of the Jordan, "The Descender," which flows south with innumerable windings into the Dead Sea. From its source to its mouth it has a descent of nearly 3,000 feet; its windings are so numerous that in a space of sixty-five miles, in a straight line from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, it traverses, in its innumerable curves, at least 200 miles.

¹ Farrar, "Life of Christ," p. 67.

The original inhabitants were of various tribes, and portions of their history are involved in great obscurity. The Canaanites, as we have seen, were descendants of Ham, while Abraham and his kindred were descendants of Shem. The Hivites dwelt in the northern part of the country at the foot of Mount Hermon.¹ They were defeated, together with the united forces of northern Canaan, by Joshua.² The Canaanites, in the restricted meaning of the word, inhabited the northern valley and the plains west of the Jordan on the coast of the Mediterranean. The Girgashites also dwelt on the west of the Jordan.³ The Jebusites occupied the hill country around Jerusalem whose ancient name was "Jebus."⁴ The Benjamites, to whom this region was assigned, did not fully drive out the Jebusites; it was David who first captured the citadel of Jebus.⁵ The Amorites, in the earlier history of Palestine, inhabited the region south of Jerusalem on the western side of the Dead Sea.⁶ Later they spread themselves out over the mountains which formed the southeastern part of Canaan. They had, as we have seen, before the time of Moses, two kingdoms on the eastern side of Jordan. The Hittites, or children of Heth, dwelt among the Amorites in the mountainous district of the south,⁷ the district afterward called the "Mountain of Judah."⁸ In Abraham's time they possessed Hebron.⁹ After the invasion of Canaan they moved farther north. The Perizzites seem to have occupied various parts of Canaan; and the name is closely associated with that of the Canaanites when Abraham¹⁰ entered the land. In addition to these seven tribes there were others of the same parentage, such as the Arkites, Arvadites, and other tribes of different origins, such as the Anakim, the Amalekites, and still others.¹¹ Taking these people as a whole, at the time of the Israelitish invasion, their history is striking, instructive, and interesting. The Israelites regarded them as monsters of iniquity. They, in the judgment of their conquerors, deserved absolute extermination; but we can see that they, also, in the divine providence, had a mission to fulfill. They had their part to perform as parents of civilization, founders of literature, and pioneers of commerce.

The Phœnician power attained its highest development when Israel sojourned in Egypt—at least so recent discoveries seem to show. With a comparatively high degree of civilization came luxury; and with luxury eventually came demoralization. This law finds its illustration in the history of all peoples, in all countries, and in all centuries. Modern discoveries are giving special interest to these early inhabitants; and still fuller investigation will doubtless add results of greater value to those already secured. It thus comes to pass that much of interest gathers about this Phœnician race. The aboriginal inhabitants, in the view of many writers, once belonged to a region so dim and shadowy that they were called Rephaim, a word afterward used vaguely to describe the ghostly guardians of the under-world.¹² They appear before us amid the shadows of that remote time, as lofty in stature and fierce in warfare. On the west of the Jordan they appear especially under two names, the Anakim in the southern mountains, and the Avites on the Maritime Plain.¹³ Soon came powerful chiefs belonging to the Phœnician or Canaanitish branch of the Semitic race. The Canaanites, or Lowlanders, occupied the lowlands along the coast. But it is most interesting to remember that Canaanite is but another name for Phœnician, and that the accursed race, as it appears in the Books of Joshua and Judges, is the same as that from which Greece received letters, commerce, and civilization.¹⁴ Indeed, the Septuagint translators, in two cases, use Phœnician rather than Canaanite.¹⁵ Had they adopted this word throughout, our ideas of the ancient inhabitants of Palestine would be vastly more favorable than they now are. They certainly were a remarkable people; hints are given presenting them to us with their dusky complexions, their gigantic forms, their monarchical institutions,

¹ Joshua xi, 3.

² Joshua x, xi.

³ Joshua xxiv, 11.

⁴ Joshua xviii, 28.

⁵ I. Chronicles xi, 5.

⁶ Genesis xiv, 7-13.

⁷ Joshua xi, 3.

⁸ Joshua xx, 7.

⁹ Genesis xxiii, 2.

¹⁰ Genesis xiii, 17.

¹¹ Genesis x, 17, 18; Numbers xiii, 29.

¹² Stanley, "Jewish Church," I, p. 230, and the authorities there quoted.

¹³ Stanley, "Jewish Church," I, p. 231; Deuteronomy ii, 21-23.

¹⁴ Stanley, "Jewish Church," I, p. 232.

¹⁵ LXX; Exodus xvi, 35; Joshua v, 1.

their superiority in social arts, their treasures of brass, iron, and gold, their ability in erecting fortified towns, and their observance of the rite of circumcision. Their religious worship appears to have been peculiarly degrading, consisting of human sacrifices, licentious orgies, and the service of many divinities. As we might naturally suppose, the Gentile accounts of this people showed but little conception of the degrading and debasing cruelties and nameless sins which true Israelites loathed—sins found in connection with the worship of Baal, Ashtoreth, and Moloch; and yet these are substantially the same deities so familiar to us under the names of Jupiter, Apollo, Venus, Hercules, and Adonis.¹ In the mythology of Greece we have the bright side of this heathenism; but in the religious worship of these early inhabitants of Palestine we have the horribly dark side. The legend of Cadmus shows how they introduced letters to the Greeks; and probably the Hebrews, also, derived their letters from the same source. They founded colonies at Cyprus, Rhodes, Crete, Asia Minor, Sicily, and Spain. We know, too, that Carthage derived its name of Punic, and probably its language, also, from this same people. The Bible presents them, according to some interpreters, as a Turanian race;² and their adoption of the Syrian language, authorities claim, does not disprove their Turanian origin. It certainly is interesting that under the name of Hittite, or Chittite, they were among the leading races of that early day. Carchemish was their capital, and they held a position of equality with the Babylonian and Egyptian powers. Recent researches at Carchemish, made in 1874 and 1875, by Mr. Skene, the British Consul at Aleppo, seem to establish this fact. Previous to these discoveries, we were dependent upon tradition and monuments for our knowledge of this people. Joshua gave their power a terrible blow, and Rameses III., in his expedition against the Syrians, gave the final blow to their preëminence.³ Their religion seems to have been the parents of the religions of Greece and Rome. Baal was equivalent to Zeus; and Ashtoreth possessed the characteristics of Artemis and Aphrodite. The worship of Asherah, the prototype of Rhea or Cybele, combined certain phallic rites “with the idea of the fecundity of nature.” It is not necessary here to trace all the points of similarity between their worship and that of the classic nations; it is sufficient to say that the chief deities known to Greece were derived from the Phœnician pantheon, and that they probably had a similar place in Babylonian worship. They not only gave the Greeks the letters of the alphabet, but also much information in astronomy, in navigation, and in the manufacture of glass, purple, and many other things. No other people ever rivaled the Canaanites, or Phœnicians, in the mixture of bloodshed and debauchery with which they worshiped their deities.⁴ All their rites were stained with blood.

They seem to have been divided like the ancient Greeks into a number of separate states; many of which were probably monarchical, but some had a republican form of government. Their kings seemed to have possessed autocratic power, as is implied in several references to them in the Book of Joshua;⁵ and the people seem to have been, on the whole, peaceful in their habits and mercantile in their pursuits. There were, however, leagues formed by both the northern and southern tribes for offense and defense.⁶ Perhaps, indeed, the great Hittite power was already on the wane when Joshua made his triumphant entry into Canaan. They seem, at one time, to have owed a sort of feudal allegiance to their Hittite head at Carchemish.⁷ Tyre and Sidon, even to a late period, showed the remarkable degree of their commercial achievement and mercantile enterprise. For trading purposes they established settlements on the Mediterranean shore. Other nations of the times were not sailors; the Jews thought of the sea with fear, but the hardy Phœnicians ventured beyond the Pillars of Hercules. They established a large trade in tin and other metals, with the inhabitants of otherwise unknown islands.⁸ They have left footprints in Spain which remain until this day. This was the character of the

¹ Stanley, “Jewish Church,” I, p. 234. ² Genesis ix, 18, x, 15-18. ³ Introduction to Joshua in “Pulpit Commentary,” pp. 24, 25, *et seq.*; Wright, “The Empire of the Hittites,” pp. 35, 114, 115.

⁴ Introduction to Joshua in “Pulpit Commentary,” p. 26.

⁵ Joshua ii, 1, 2, ix, 1, x, 1, 3, 5, xi, 1, 2.

⁶ Introduction to Joshua in “Pulpit Commentary,” p. 27.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

original inhabitants of Palestine. Against such a people did Joshua have to contend. His military skill, his personal bravery, and the help of God, were all needed in fighting so powerful a foe. The victories he achieved have, to a great degree, shaped the moral progress of the world; for both Christianity and Mohammedanism have sprung from these conquests. Hence, the reason for declaring that Joshua's conquest of Canaan was an event of world-wide importance. It was an event so great in its influence that we might well expect God would mark it with portent and prodigy, and many miraculous displays of divine power.

We have already seen that the task before Joshua was no holiday encounter. He was to war against one of the oldest and greatest nations of antiquity. Thothmes III. brought much booty from Palestine and adjacent countries, and the records of Rameses II. give evidence of the power of these people in the time of Moses. Valuable possessions, such as gold, cattle, ivory, ebony, horses, chariots inlaid with gold and silver, fragrant woods, gold vessels, ornaments of lapis lazuli, vases of silver, precious stones, and plunder of every kind such as would be produced in a rich and civilized country, were brought to Egypt from Palestine by Thothmes.¹ It was thus no vacant territory that Joshua was to enter, and no savage people that he was to overcome. His difficulties were numerous and great. The Canaanites were furnished with horses and iron chariots, or at least chariots armed with sharp sickles at the hub of the wheels. Some suppose that such chariots were unknown at this time, but it is certain that there were chariots in some way strengthened by iron.² Joshua had to take fortresses and to destroy formidable leagues of brave chieftains and ambitious kings. Against soldiers thus equipped he could only oppose a rude, half-armed militia, with inadequate training and miserable equipment. The Israelites were approaching as invaders; the Canaanites were fighting for their homes and native land. The Israelites came as strangers to the intricate mountain paths and dangerous caves; the Canaanites were familiar with every inch of the soil in valley and on mountain. Every element within them was thus aroused to defend their land and save themselves from hated invaders.

But the Hebrews came with a fiery enthusiasm and a holy energy; like the valiant Franks of the fifth century they came to seek a new home. They were inspired by religious zeal; they believed themselves to be the instruments of God to destroy his foes and to establish his truth. They had failed forty years before because they were not wholly loyal to God. The forty years of wandering in the Wilderness, with its painful discipline and frequent punishment received because of idolatrous tendencies, and especially because of God's recent display of righteous wrath against their partial submission to the abominations of Baal-peor,³ had wrought wonderful changes in their character. They were now recovered from their wandering, and were fierce and zealous for God. They were, therefore, inspired with a holy enthusiasm and an irresistible energy. They believed that God was going before them, that he would fight their battles and would win their victories. Though marching on foot, they believed they could capture chariots and horses, overthrow walled cities, and win glorious victories for God. In this spirit of lofty enthusiasm and holy inspiration, they crossed the Jordan and entered the land of promise.

¹ Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," II, p. 384, and authorities there quoted.

² Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," II, p. 385, and his authorities.

³ Numbers xxv, 5.

CHAPTER II.

JOSHUA AND HIS WORK.

WITH the exception, probably, of the Book of Daniel, no other books in the Bible have given rise to more discussion than the Pentateuch and Joshua as to date and authorship. The great miracles of the Book of Joshua have sometimes even created a suspicion regarding its reliability as history. The Talmud affirms that Joshua was its author, that Eleazar wrote the account of Joshua's death, and that Phinehas gave the account of the death of Eleazar. The earlier Jewish tradition considered it a contemporary document. Keil and some others believe that it was composed twenty-five or thirty years after Joshua's death.¹ Critic follows critic, showing the absurdity of his predecessor's opinion, only to have his opinions in turn reduced to similar absurdities by his successors. It is not necessary to go into a full statement of the various theories regarding the authorship of this book. As a rule, the destructive critics assume that there is no place for the supernatural in the history; that the parts which claim to be prophecies were written after the occurrence of the events which they assume to foretell; that all the prophecies are legendary additions to historic facts; that the book is the work of many authors; and, finally, that the critics may authoritatively determine the authors of the various portions of the record. But the contradictions of these critics go far to neutralize their authority. The methods some of them employ, if applied to Hume or Macaulay, to Motley or to Prescott, to Shakespeare or to Milton, would reduce their writings to hopeless confusion and meaningless absurdities. The lofty assumptions of some of these critics regarding their predecessors are equaled only by the assumption of their successors regarding themselves. Ingenious though many of these theories are, those of their opponents are equally ingenious, and equally untrustworthy. Ewald regarded the Book of Joshua as "a composition of the Deuteronomist in the time of Manasseh." But where in the book can any conclusive evidence be found that it was written in the time of Manasseh? That there are many and great difficulties in the book all admit; but that there are more numerous and still greater difficulties in the theories of some of these critics may be fearlessly affirmed. That the book was written at an early period is evident from the entire absence of reference to the condition of Israel in later periods of its history. The book gives no evidence of the regal state which marked the history in later times. It seems absolutely certain that it was written before the time of David, for it is affirmed that up to the time of writing the Jebusites dwelt among the people.² The reference to the place which God should choose³ indicates that the temple had not then been erected, nor even its site selected. The reference to the Gibeonites,⁴ without mentioning Saul's neglect of the promise of protection⁵ made to them, suggests that the book was written before Saul's time. Quite too much has been made by some critics of the phrase "until this day," as suggesting a late authorship for the book. The writer indulges in the habit of repetition which is always characteristic of the early literary period in a nation's history.⁶ Verbal criticism is seldom authoritative in fixing dates or authors; but there are several striking verbal peculiarities which greatly help us in reaching decisions both as to author and date.

The writer's familiarity with the history of the tribe of Judah indicates that he was a resident within the limits of that tribe. A similar remark applies to his knowledge of the

¹ Introduction to Joshua in "Pulpit Commentary."

² Joshua xv, 63.

³ Joshua ix, 27.

⁴ Joshua ix.

⁵ II. Samuel xxi.

⁶ Introduction to Joshua in "Pulpit Commentary."

personal history of Caleb,¹ and of the city of Hebron.² The almost uniform Jewish tradition is that it was written by Joshua;³ and several Christian writers down to recent times, among whom are Köning and, so far as concerns the first division of the book, Hävernicks,⁴ so believe. No one could so well write the account of Joshua's frequent intercourse with God as Joshua himself;⁵ and no one was so likely as Joshua to commit to writing the two addresses,⁶ delivered in circumstances of so great solemnity, which were Joshua's legacy to the people. He had, also, peculiar facilities of knowing the events related and for collecting documents and making records. The example of Moses in this regard, we may fairly assume, would have its influence on Joshua, his pupil and successor. The additions, undoubtedly made to the book⁷ after Joshua's death, do not invalidate the claim that it was substantially his composition; other events, some of which may have occurred, or at least were completed, after Joshua's death, may also have been added to the record by another writer. It is almost certain, therefore, that the greater part of the book was written by Joshua himself, and all parts of it soon after his death. The expression, "Unto this day," is found fourteen times in the book; but, as already remarked, it does not carry the weight of evidence which many have given it, for in three places,⁸ at least, it undoubtedly refers to a period during the twenty-five years which Joshua lived in Canaan; and in other instances it clearly goes to a period but a little more remote.⁹ In the other passages in which it is used there is no positive contradiction to this interpretation.¹⁰ Those who find difficulties in believing that Joshua was the author of the volume do not get rid of them by assigning the book to a later date, and attributing it to another author.

It is important, also, that some reference be made to the scope and contents of the book. It consists of twenty-four chapters, and is divided into three main parts: (1) Conquest of Canaan, the first twelve chapters; (2) The Division of Canaan, the next ten chapters; (3) Joshua's Farewell, the two remaining chapters. The period covered by the book is probably about twenty-five years. The first twelve chapters are a continuous narrative, the account being often so minute as to show that it was written by an eyewitness. The divine presence is continually felt in every part of the history. We seem to keep step with the leadership of God in the solemn preparation, the tremendous struggle, and the glorious victory.

The whole style of the Book of Joshua is simple and natural. It is free from hero worship; it does not glory in man. But still Joshua is its chief figure, as it opens with the account of his installation in his high office, and closes with the touching narrative of his death. Attention has been called to the fact that the book stands related to the Pentateuch somewhat as the Book of the Acts of the Apostles does to the Gospels.¹¹ In the Pentateuch we have a statement of the laws of Judaism; in the Book of Joshua we have an illustration of the application of these laws to life and duty. The Pentateuch and the Gospels give us the youth of Judaism and of Christianity; the Books of Joshua and the Acts of the Apostles the manhood of both. In the Book of Joshua, Moses in a sense continued as a leader of the chosen people; in the Acts of the Apostles, Christ lives in apostles, evangelists, deacons, and martyrs, as the Leader of the Church. The Pentateuch and the Gospels are not primarily historic; they are the text-books of Judaism and Christianity.¹² They contain history, but simply enough to make clearer the principles which they teach; but the Books of Joshua and the Acts are distinctively historical. The Book of Joshua, therefore, is not simply an appendix to the Pentateuch; and, strictly speaking, it is not a preface to the books that follow; it is a link between the two, and yet it has an independent character of its own.

¹ Compare Joshua xiv, 13-15 with xv, 13, 14, xxi, 11-13.

² Joshua xiv, 13-15, xv, 13-19.

³ *Baba Bathra*, *Cap. I*, fol. 14b.

⁴ "MacClintock and Strong Cyclopædia," article on Joshua.

⁵ Joshua i, 1, iii, 7, iv, 1, v, 2, 9, vi, 2, vii, 10, viii, 1.

⁶ Joshua xxiii, xxiv.

⁷ Joshua xv, 13-19, xv, 63, xix, 47,

xxiv, 29-33.

⁸ Joshua xxii, 3, xxiii, 8, 9.

⁹ Joshua iv, 9, vii, 26, viii, 29, x, 27.

¹⁰ Joshua viii, 28, xiii, 13, xiv, 14,

xv, 63, xvi, 10.

¹¹ Dr. Donald Fraser, Lectures on "The Books of the Bible," p. 78.

¹² Introduction to Joshua in

"Pulpit Commentary," p. 8.

It would be possible to trace the similarity between Joshua and the Acts even to details.¹ As Israel was hindered by the walls of Jericho, so the Church was hindered by the ignorance and the prejudice of the men of Jerusalem. At these two cities war had to begin, and their surrender was necessary to subsequent progress. The seven days in the one case are paralleled by the ten in the other. When the day of Pentecost was fully come, the trumpet of the Gospel, blown by the Apostle Peter, caused the walls to fall, and gave the Church its first great victory. As Achan sinned and suffered, so Ananias and Sapphira attempted to deceive, and suffered the penalty of death. As Joshua led the tribes to battlefields, so Jesus, as the true Head of the Church under such officers as Peter, John, Paul, and others of like faith and zeal, led the Church into fierce conflicts and secured for the Church glorious conquests. Antioch, Damascus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome will take their place beside the cities conquered by the triumphant hosts under the leadership of Joshua. There were Canaanites still left in the land to corrupt the Church of God in the days of the apostles as in the days of Joshua. The Book of Joshua bears also a close relation to Christian experience. It illustrates the trials of individual saints in their conflicts with sin and Satan. At the Jordan both Jesus and Joshua began their public ministry. The Church also has its Gilgal, with its memories of neglected duties and its encouragements to their performance. The Church also has its corn of the land ready for the nourishment of the soldiers of Christ. The Church has its spiritual foes as truly as had Israel; but while Joshua dies, the Captain of our Salvation lives and reigns forever, and gives us the assurance that our triumph shall be complete and eternal.

"Moses my servant is dead!"² This is a truly startling announcement in the history of Israel. This is, also, the divine greeting to the noble Joshua. Who can be a successor to the great Moses? Who can take up the work which the illustrious leader and inspired lawgiver lays down? Are God's resources exhausted? Has he no other leader for his chosen people? He may not have another Moses; but another Moses is not needed. "To every man his work,"³ is a divine law. A great variety of gifts is needed in the work of the Lord, and men possessing a great variety of gifts are furnished by the Lord for his work. The death of the greatest man does not, after all, make much of a gap in the plans of God; God can bury or translate the leaders and still continue the march. Great trees need to be removed sometimes that saplings may have room to grow. Few would expect after reading, "Now, after the death of Moses," that the command would immediately be given, "Now, therefore, arise, go over this Jordan;"⁴ but this is God's method. He immediately calls another leader into his service. He practically tells the people not to bow their heads in too much sorrow, not to spend strength and time in useless tears. The loss, indeed, is great, but there shall be an element of gain even in the great loss. The shadow will not be long upon the path. Leaders die, but God lives, and his work must go forward. Let, then, his people arise, gird on the sword, and continue their march of trial and triumph. A new era is dawning; a new leader is furnished. Great as is the blank in the history of Israel when Moses dies, there shall be a leader divinely equipped, who shall accomplish the divinely appointed end. Not a priest, but a soldier, is to be the successor of Moses, and he is none other than the brave and noble Joshua, the son of Nun. He is a man of illustrious pedigree; it reaches back to Joseph.⁵ Elishama, his grandfather, marched through the wilderness of Sinai at the head of his tribe; perhaps he had special charge of the embalmed body of Joseph.⁶ It is a great gain to have noble ancestors; and in this honor the tribe of Ephraim fully shared. Moses acted personally in this matter and earnestly referred to the divine promise in the case.⁷ Already Joshua has been honored as the heroic assistant of Moses; already as his bosom friend.⁸ They furnished one of the best

¹ Fraser, "Books of the Bible," p. 79, *et seq.*

² Joshua i, 2.

³ Mark xiii, 34.

⁴ Joshua i, 2.

⁵ I. Chronicles vii, 20-27; Numbers i, 10, ii, 18-24.

⁶ Parker, "People's Bible," V, p. 45.

⁷ Exodus xiii, 19.

⁸ Exodus xxiv, 13, 14.

illustrations of an unselfish and beautiful friendship to be found in the early history of Israel. To Joshua will be intrusted the difficult, but successful, leadership of the chosen people. The history will not cease, nor will its continuity be broken, although a new leader is provided. This glorious promise was given to Joshua, "As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee. I will not fail thee nor forsake thee."¹ Was ever a nobler promise given to any man? The man to whom such a promise is given will be strong and do exploits for God and for man!

Moses and Joshua differed greatly, and doubtless men of widely different characteristics were needed. For the work now awaiting Israel a soldier was required, and a soldier was furnished—the first soldier set apart for this purpose in the history of God's people. Joshua has not been conspicuous as a teacher; he did not assume the functions of a prophet. Dean Stanley has pointed out that he even disliked the extension of prophecy and "could not restrain his indignation when he heard that there were unauthorized prophesiers within the camp."² He was a simple-hearted man, a dauntless leader, and a heroic soldier. He first appears in sacred history when appointed to repel the attack of Amalek.³ But for a long time he remained in obscurity. God's great men must bide their time. The true Joshua lived in silence for thirty years in the obscure and dishonored village of Nazareth. Joshua stands on a sublimely historic hilltop midway between Moses and Samuel. His spear is ever associated with his name, and he appears constantly before us with it in his hand or hanging from his shoulder. He was exhorted by the Lord, in connection with the sublime promise of which we have spoken, to be "very courageous";⁴ and his patient labors and his wonderful achievements show how fully he obeyed this exhortation. Never did he turn to the right hand or to the left, however difficult and dangerous his duties were.

We see him moving grandly forward leading the hosts from Jordan to Jericho,⁵ from Jericho to Ai,⁶ from Ai to Gibeon,⁷ from Gibeon to Beth-horon,⁸ and on at last to Merom.⁹ He was marked by that most uncommon sense which we call common sense. He was a Napoleon in his ability to make a forced march; a Grant in his patient heroism; a Lincoln in his love of liberty and justice; and a Gustavus Adolphus, a William the Silent, a Havelock, a Gordon, a "Stonewall" Jackson, and a General Howard in his consciousness of the divine presence and inspiration. Not to him, as to Moses, did the divine command come in the burning bush; but it came to him in the person, as we believe, of Jehovah-Jesus, appearing as Captain of the host of the Lord, with a drawn sword in his hand.¹⁰ The drawn sword symbolized his form of duty, and bravely did he do it until the kings of Canaan, the enemies of the Lord and of Israel, lay conquered at his feet.¹¹ If ever there was a name given to a man by divine prescience, it was the name Joshua. Originally the name was Hoshea, meaning "Salvation";¹² later it was changed to Jehoshua, or simply Joshua, meaning "God's Salvation." It finally, through the Greek, took the form of Jason, but more often the form of that name which is above every name, "Jesus."¹³

Most writers have seen a striking resemblance between the lives of Joshua and Jesus. This analogy is not fanciful; it demands our considerate attention and our appreciative recognition. In that early day the name of Joshua suggested the deliverance which Jesus was to secure for his people from their enemies, and especially from the great enemy of the human race. Joshua saved Israel from Canaanitish and other foes; Jesus was to "save his people from their sins."¹⁴ The history of Joshua also suggests the martial and soldier-like features under which Christ is so often represented as "The Captain of their Salvation."¹⁵ Joshua began his life by sharing the sufferings of his brethren in Egypt; so Jesus took upon himself the form of a servant and suffered with his brethren. The passage of Jordan under Joshua was

¹ Joshua i, 5.² Numbers xi, 28.³ Exodus xvii, 10.⁴ Joshua i, 7.⁵ Joshua vi, 2.⁶ Joshua viii, 1.⁷ Joshua ix, 17.⁸ Joshua x, 10.⁹ Joshua xi, 7.¹⁰ Joshua v, 13.¹¹ Stanley, "Jewish Church," I, p. 253.¹² Numbers xiii, 16.¹³ Stanley, "Jewish Church," I, p. 254.¹⁴ Matthew i, 21.¹⁵ Hebrews ii, 10.

free from difficulty and danger; so Jesus robs the river of death of its terrors. Joshua took twelve stones from the bed of the Jordan as witnesses of the deliverance wrought by God; so Christ selected twelve living witnesses of his resurrection. Joshua also suggests Jesus as the Overcomer of all enemies, a character which is conspicuously illustrated in the writings of the Apostle John, both in his Gospel and in the Book of Revelation.¹ Joshua brought Israel into the land of promise; Jesus brings his people into the heavenly Canaan. When Joshua completed his work he ascended the Mount of Ephraim and lived in quiet and security from his foes; so Jesus, having finished his final work, ascended to the right hand of God.²

Joshua was the son of Nun, and of the tribe of Ephraim. He grew up as a slave in the brickfields of Egypt. He learned to rule wisely in manhood, because he learned to obey promptly in boyhood. It is evident that he was born about the time Moses fled into Midian; he was, therefore, a man about forty to forty-four years old at the time of the Exodus from Egypt. Moses was skillful in knowing and using men, and he readily discovered the qualities in Joshua which would make him, for the time, his fitting colleague, and afterward his able successor. At the fight with Amalek at Rephidim, Moses chose Joshua to lead the hosts of Israel.³ When Moses ascended Mount Sinai to receive the tables of the law, Joshua accompanied him for a part of the distance,⁴ and was the first to meet him on his return. He was uncontaminated by the idolatry of the golden calf. He was also one of the twelve chiefs sent to explore Canaan,⁵ and he was one of the two who had courage and knowledge sufficient to give a favorable report of what they saw. He and Caleb were the only ones of the twelve exploring princes who urged the people at once to enter the promised land.⁶ At the close of the forty years of wandering, Joshua remained as one of the few survivors of the earlier day, and Moses, but a little time before his death, solemnly inaugurated him and invested him with authority of headship over the people.⁷ He was thus chosen for the service which Moses forfeited at Meribah.⁸ Later, God gave an additional charge to Joshua.⁹ We shall see later in his history that his is one of the lives, so few in any history recorded with completeness, on which no stain ever rested. Had he lived in the Middle Ages, he would have been celebrated by chronicler and poet as a knight, warrior, and saint. He combined the gentleness of a pure and noble life with the whole-souled courage which comes from a high and unselfish motive. He stood near to God; he heard the word and saw the vision of the Almighty. His majestic presence inspired Israel with awe,¹⁰ while his mildness and gentleness in remonstrating with the erring showed the love of a father's heart. He was permitted to gather the fruit of the seeds which Moses sowed. During his active life the Hebrews were preëminently the people of God; but dark shadows fell upon the close of his life, because of the worldly and idolatrous spirit of the people. He was probably about eighty-four years of age at the time of the passage of the Jordan; and for the next twenty-six years he was actively engaged in his great work of conquering and dividing the land which God gave to him and his people. His unselfishness showed itself in his waiting until all others had received their share before he asked anything for himself,¹¹ and the portion which he received was small at best,¹² and was located in the rough mountain country which had been given to his own tribe of Ephraim.¹³ In that portion of the land he received Timnath-Serah,¹⁴ for which he had asked, and there he spent his remaining days. At the age of 110 his beautiful life ended¹⁵ in harmony with the spirit which had marked it from the beginning of his public career. At Shechem he summoned the tribes to a solemn assembly; he warned them against idols in the heart, and gave them a farewell charge to be ever faithful to God.¹⁶ Joshua knew the fickleness, rebellion, and idolatry of his own nation, and so, almost with his last breath, he faithfully warned

¹ Revelation iii, 21.² Ephesians iv, 8, *et al.*³ Exodus xvii, 9.⁴ Exodus xxiv, 13.⁵ Numbers xiii, 16.⁶ Numbers xiv, 6-9, xxxii, 11, 12.⁷ Deuteronomy xxxiv, 9.⁸ Numbers xx, 11-13; xxvii, 15-23.⁹ Joshua i, 1-9.¹⁰ Joshua iv, 14.¹¹ Joshua xix, 49.¹² Joshua xix, 50.¹³ Joshua xix, 50.¹⁴ Joshua xix, 50.¹⁵ Judges ii, 8.¹⁶ Joshua xxiv, 1.

them to beware of the abominations of their heathen neighbors. Not so much as a warrior, but rather as a friend and father, does he address them. Standing on the brink of the grave, he exhorts and commands them to live in the fear of the Lord. Thus, in simplicity of heart, in loyalty to his people, and in consecration to his God, this aged servant passed to a better Canaan—even an heavenly.

But we return to the order of the narrative. As soon as the mourning over the death of Moses was over, Joshua, now the leader of the people, made the necessary preparations for crossing the Jordan. He gave command that provisions for three days should be prepared; and he also reminded the tribes east of the Jordan of their promise to aid their brethren.¹ He also sent two spies to Jericho, as this was the first city which he intended to attack.² This city they reached in safety, and there they abode with a woman named Rahab, who lived on the city wall.³ Their entrance, however, had been observed, and soon the king sent to Rahab, commanding her to give up her visitors as spies. But their hostess became their unexpected ally; and she manifested a remarkable degree of ingenuity in devising methods for their safety, and for throwing the king's messengers off their track. She affirmed that her guests had already left her, but might be caught if their pursuers hastened at once for that purpose. But her guests were safely hidden on the flat roof of her house, and were covered by the flax which had been recently gathered and was left upon the roof to dry.⁴ The king's warriors hastily left the house and made for the passage of the Jordan with all the speed which they could command, and the gates were soon shut behind them, as the time for closing them had come. Their hostess then went to the spies on the house-top, telling them that she had rescued them because she feared the Lord. Already the people of Jericho had heard much of Jehovah, of how the Red Sea became dry at his command, and of how the lands of Sihon and Og had fallen before the power of God's people. She intimated that everyone trembled before them, as no one could withstand the power of Jehovah, the God of Israel, and the God also of heaven and earth.⁵ She then besought the spies to spare her, saying, "Swear unto me by the Lord, since I have shewed you kindness, that ye will also shew kindness unto my father's house, and give me a true token."⁶ The spies, grateful for the kindness which she had shown, and fully believing that they were acting in harmony with the will of God, took the oath with the condition that she should prove faithful to the end. They then arranged that when they took the city they would shelter her and all her relatives in her own house, and that the besiegers should know the house by the sign of a red cord.⁷ The spies were then let down through the window over the city wall. For three days they hid among the mountains,⁸ and then, having bravely swam across the Jordan, they reached the camp in safety, apparently on the fifth day, and they were able to report, saying, "Jehovah has given us the land, for its inhabitants tremble for fear before us."⁹

The pledge which the spies made to Rahab, Joshua and the tribes faithfully kept. We know that she was afterward married to Salmon, a prince of the tribe of Judah and son of Naason;¹⁰ she became the mother of Boaz, the grandfather of Jesse, the father of David. Thus Rahab was one of the ancestors of him who was David's son and David's Lord. Thus, also, she was one of the four women, all foreigners, who are named in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus—Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. These were not stainless names; and this fact has its purpose in connection with the work of Christ. The relatives of Rahab also shared in the blessings conferred upon her, lived permanently in Israel, and were placed on a footing of entire equality and of hearty friendship.

There has been much discussion regarding the character of Rahab, and the moral quality of the act which she performed for the people of God. Several scholars of repute prefer the

¹ Joshua i, 11-15.

Joshua ii, 1-3.

³ Joshua ii, 15.⁴ Joshua ii, 6.⁵ Joshua ii, 11.⁶ Joshua ii, 12.⁷ Joshua ii, 18.⁸ Joshua ii, 22.⁹ Joshua ii, 24.¹⁰ Matthew i, 5.

more modest rendering of the word usually translated "harlot," and make it mean simply a hostess; but it is no doubt useless to attempt to explain Rahab's position as simply that of a hostess. Eastern khans, strictly speaking, are not controlled by hosts, far less by hostesses; and the custom of the country would not permit these spies to lodge at the house of any reputable oriental woman. It is interesting to see how providence coöperated with various coincidences¹ in relation to the visit of the spies to the house of Rahab. Probably hers was the only house into which they could go without arousing the suspicion of the enemy. We cannot understand all of God's purposes in using unworthy instruments for carrying out his divine designs.² The woman was there, and the help she could render was needed. Of that help the spies took advantage at this critical period in their journey, and in the history of a great and divine movement. God can use unworthy men and women to advance his divine purposes, and to achieve his determined results. We cannot trace the path of the Almighty when he is treading these devious and obscure ways. Who can say how much the character of the Son of Man was determined by these strains of Gentile, and, as we would say, of tainted blood? Who can determine how much this fact had to do with the sympathy which he manifested for certain classes of women during his earthly career? Who can tell what memories of his own strangely commingled national life filled his soul and moved his heart? Every man is his ancestors in remarkable ways; every man is his descendants in ways equally wonderful and mysterious. No one has yet fully understood the laws of heredity.³ Jesus Christ was the human race; he was, in the profoundest sense, the Son of Man. All the nobility of man and all the tenderness of woman were wrapped up in and manifested by this unique Man. He knew humanity in all its temptations and achievements. Rahab was a student of God's dealings with the nations. Perhaps she enjoyed special opportunities for acquiring knowledge of current events. Perhaps, also, she had her times of serious thoughtfulness over the possibilities of a nobler life. Even the most terribly lost have such times. No one, however, must suppose that the Word of God indorses the character of Rahab as a whole, or even the part which she performed in this strange transaction. She was guilty of falsehood and treason. Nowhere does the Bible indorse her treachery or falsehood; it narrates, but does not approve, her conduct. It never pronounced a eulogy on either her conduct or her character. She had remarkable faith and equal intelligence regarding God's presence and purpose. She seemed, in this respect, to rise above herself, above the life she lived, and above the faith even of Israel. God is evermore selecting in strange ways those whom he divinely guides and heroically inspires for sublime faith and work. It was true in that early day, as often at a later time, that scarcely in Israel did he find so great faith and obedience. The Bible often approves of one quality in men and women, while its principles practically rebuke all their other characteristics. This statement finds illustration in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. Let it, then, be distinctly understood that God nowhere commends the falsehood of Rahab. The Bible in this respect is absolutely clear of blame.⁴

When the soldiers of the king demanded the messengers from Rahab, their request was in harmony with eastern customs, which assumed that no man would enter a woman's house without her knowledge and permission. As it was the time of the barley harvest, flax and barley being ripe at the same time in the Jordan valley, bundles of flax stalks were naturally on the roof of the house, undergoing the process of drying. The stalks of flax often grow to the height of three feet, and are as thick as a cane. But for the introduction of this woman into Israel, and for her relation to our Lord, probably no commentator would for a moment question the natural interpretation of the narrative regarding her character. She, however, became a public benefactor to the people of God, and has honor in the history

¹ Parker, "People's Bible," V, p. 82.

³ Parker, "People's Bible," V, p. 83.

² Blaikie, "Book of Joshua," p. 153, *et seq.*

⁴ Parker, "People's Bible," V, p. 84, *et seq.*

of Israel, in the history of Christianity, and in the history even of the human race. That scarlet cord hanging from the window marked her house, and is illustrative of the scarlet line which runs all through Revelation, marking the presence of Christ as the sacrifice for men, and suggesting the safety which comes to those who trust in the great truth thus suggestively symbolized.



RUTH.

CHAPTER III.

THE JORDAN AND JERICHO.

WE are now approaching a greater crisis in the history of Israel than any which she had experienced since she crossed the Red Sea. A new epoch is opening before her and us. Great results, for weal and for woe, depend upon the events of the next few days in the history of the people of God. The spies have returned, bringing the information that Jehovah has given Israel the land, and that the "inhabitants tremble for fear before us." Between the people and the promised land lies the deep valley of the Jordan, and its gloriously historic and strangely mysterious river; and they must prepare to cross it and to possess the land.

It was a time of deep thankfulness on the part of Joshua, and on the part of all the more thoughtful of the people. Between them and the land rolled the river Jordan, whose current was now swollen to an unusual degree. This river was formed by the junction of three mountain streams, themselves formed by numerous fountains and springs of Lebanon. An order was issued that the people should "sanctify"¹ themselves by legal purifications and by heart-examination in prospect of the wonders soon to be performed by God. The cloudy pillar seems to have disappeared with the death of Moses; but the Sacred Ark was now in a special sense the symbol of God's presence. It was near the Passover. The river was greatly swollen because of the melting of the snows on Hermon, and it here and there overflowed its banks. To ford it was absolutely impossible; but it was not necessary. God was now to show Israel and the nations that he was still the leader of his people. The narrator describes the passage over the river with distinctness and beauty. It is a scene which is never forgotten by subsequent writers; it is a scene which has been taken up into the hymnology of the world, and into the touching allegories of Bunyan and other writers. On the bank of the swollen stream we see the priests with the Ark on their shoulders. At the appointed time they bore it forward until their feet touched the water of the rapid-flowing river. The Ark of God was not now occupying its secure central position, but was carried in the van. This movement was dangerous, though necessary to the fulfillment of the divine design. Joshua was apparently exposed to any sudden attack or secret ambush of the enemy; and had such an attack been made, the Sacred Ark might have been captured and the hopes of the people would have been disappointed; but the Ark was borne forward in safety to the bank of the river. The army followed at a distance of more than three-quarters of a mile.² The warriors of Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh left their families and flocks behind and joined in the heroic and pious enterprise.³ The river, swollen by the early rains and the melting snows on Mount Lebanon, rolled its full volume at the feet of the priests as they stood with the Ark on their shoulders. The Ark was borne to the river; below it marched the army; the women and children being placed, according to the Jewish tradition, in the center for greater protection from the force of the current. Now occurred an amazing miracle. The feet of the priests touched the waters at the edge of the Jordan. Suddenly, as if the hand of God had been thrust into the midst of the stream, the full bed of the Jordan was dried up before their eyes. Far up the river, in Adam, the city which is beside Zaretan, as far as the parts of Kirjath-jearim⁴—that is to say, at a point thirty miles distant from the bank on which the priests stood—the waters were arrested, until they stood and rose up as if they had been congealed at the command of God. The waters below

¹ Joshua iii, 5.

² Joshua iii, 4.

³ Joshua iv, 12.

⁴ Joshua iii, 16.



DESCENT UPON THE VALLEY OF THE JORDAN

flowed off into the Dead Sea, and the river bed, during all the intervening space, was left perfectly dry. Israel then passed over dry-footed. Motionless the priests stood in the middle of the channel until the host had passed over, the waters being held back until the bearers of the Ark had left the bed of the stream. The three transjordanic tribes, numbering 40,000 men, marched in front, and were thus the first to put foot on the shore. After all had passed over, the Jordan flowed on as before, and, as before in the month Abib (part of our April and May), overflowed its banks. This stupendous miracle gave Joshua additional authority over Israel, and Israel additional power over her foes. Two appropriate monuments, each built of twelve stones, in accordance with the number of the tribes of Israel, were raised to commemorate the wonderful event. One monument stood in the middle of the Jordan where the feet of the priests had stood during the crossing;¹ this was, to some degree, simply a tribal monument. The other was a national memorial, and was built on a larger scale. As the priests left the river bed twelve stones, which had been laid bare in the bed of the river, were selected by the twelve chiefs of the tribes.² These stones were placed at Gilgal, in the center of the first encampment of the Israelites on the plain of the Jordan, and became the place of the first Sanctuary in the promised land—the first place considered specially sacred in the Jordan valley, and the place where the Tabernacle remained until it was located at Shiloh.³ For long years Gilgal gave evidence of the honor conferred upon it in connection with this wonderful occasion.

The manna on which the tribes had fed during their desert journey ceased, as soon as the river was crossed.⁴ God never needlessly multiplies miracles. It was best for the people now to eat of the last year's corn and the other produce of the country; and of these sources of supply they partook with gratitude and joy. It is believed that the site thus chosen has been identified by the Palestine Survey, at Jiljulieh, which is but a slight change in the word Gilgal. The name is given to a spot three miles southeast of the supposed site of Jericho. Here, also, all who had not undergone circumcision during the wilderness journey were by that rite introduced into the commonwealth of Israel.⁵ The neglect of that rite was regarded as a deep reproach, and that reproach was now to be removed.⁶ The knives of flint used in the performance of the rite were long preserved and regarded as relics of a peculiarly sacred character. A name commemorating the event was given to the hill where it had taken place, this hill being called Gilgal, a word whose very meaning indicated that the reproach of Egypt was "rolled away." This rite was the token of their submission to God as his chosen people. Dean Stanley reminds us that a Jewish sect is still reported to exist at Bozra which claims to have separated itself from Israel at this time because they abhor, not only circumcision, but everything that would remind them of the rite, refusing even to cut with knives at their meals. The Passover was now celebrated for the first time in Canaan,⁷ and the first since leaving Sinai—the cakes were not made of manna but from the grain of Palestine, the bread being found in the houses of the people of the district.⁸

The Jordan has been passed, memorial cairns have been erected, the rite of circumcision has been observed, and the Passover has been kept; but the glorious history has only been begun. The people did not march out of Egypt simply to cross the Jordan; they are to overthrow a city hoary with age, venerable in appearance, and strongly fortified by walls and soldiers. In divine things, as in many human affairs, one victory is but the prophecy of other victories; each step taken implies and necessitates the taking of other steps. The first miracle is but the beginning of a series of miracles in the development of the divine purpose. The Jordan of death which God's people shall cross is but the beginning of greater triumphs in the advancing eternal life in Christ. That river the great Priest of the everlasting Covenant will

¹ Joshua iv, 9.² Joshua iv, 20.³ Joshua xviii, 1.⁴ Joshua v, 12.⁵ Joshua v, 2.⁶ Joshua v, 9.⁷ Joshua v, 10.⁸ Joshua v, 12.



SOURCE OF THE JORDAN.

enable us to pass over dry-shod and we shall enter upon a still more glorious career of attainments. So with ancient Israel; in passing the Jordan that advance was but the beginning of terrible conflicts and glorious conquests. Gilgal became the frontier fortress. It formed the base of future operations, and was long the headquarters of the army and of the tribes. There the Tabernacle remained until it was removed to Shiloh. The people were now to enter upon a new career.

Even before crossing the Jordan, the attention of Joshua was fixed on Jericho. It was the key of Palestine. It lay seven miles west of the Jordan, and commanded the entrance of the chief pass into the land of Canaan. Nature and art combined to make the city apparently impregnable. On the west side were lofty and apparently impassable mountains. In the city were springs of water, and not far distant were groves of palm trees. The great military problem confronting Joshua at the beginning of his career was the capture of this city. Its abundant water supply, and the fertility of the region, so greatly increased by the heat of a tropical region nearly seven hundred feet below the level of the sea, were additional inducements to the people to capture this city. They regarded it as accursed of God, and were ready to be the instruments of God in inflicting the divine vengeance upon the place. It was also a beautiful region. Luxuriant verdure, abundant moisture, and groves of palms gave it varied charms; and the vicinity was beautified by streamlets, by cultivation, and by variegated shrubs, so that it possessed attractions not often found in Palestine. While in the camp at Gilgal, the people must have gazed on the groves of majestic palms — groves said to have been three miles in breadth and eight in length.¹ Compared with the territory through which the people had passed, this was a sight to gratify the eye and to gladden the heart. The line of mountains near the city only increased the charm of this fruitful landscape by their prominence and ruggedness. Near the base of these mountains rose, in the midst of the abounding verdure, the temples and palaces of Jericho. To the minds of the wilderness wanderers this city was as beautiful as a dream. It was famous, also, for its wealth and luxury; but it was an object of hatred to Israel, because it was the center of idolatrous worship, and especially of worship associated with all the painful memories of Baal-peor. Here was the home of Ashtoreth, the consort of Baal. Indeed, some have interpreted the word Jericho to mean "City of the Moon," and the moon was the well-known symbol of that depraved goddess. It should be said, however, that others understand the word to mean "place of fragrance." It was doubtless the abode of the most revolting rites of an abominable heathenism — a heathenism which Israel regarded as an utter abomination to Jehovah. The people must have regarded this city, notwithstanding its wealth and splendor, with abhorrence and loathing. Jericho was really the only important town in the Jordan valley. Its rich temple, its gold, silver, iron, brass, and Babylonian hangings, indicated its wealth. Above the highest trees rose its lofty walls and towers. It was known as "Jericho, the City of Palms."² It was described as "high and fenced up to heaven."

All is now ready for the attack upon this famous city, and soon it is laid under siege. We feel that we are in an atmosphere charged with divine power. The great events which already have taken place, and those pressing now upon us, are under the guidance of the God of Israel, even as was the Exodus from Egypt. Great as are the sagacity of Joshua, the courage of the spies, and the faithfulness of Rahab, we cannot but feel that behind and above all these human instrumentalities is the hand of the Almighty. The storm is about to break upon Jericho, encircled with its amphitheater of hills. The dwellers in Jericho prudently await behind their walls the attacks of the heralded foe. No one of the citizens is allowed to go in or to come out. They are prepared to offer a desperate resistance; but to their amazement no attempt is made to storm the walls, or to force the gates. They see simply a peaceful procession marching in

¹ Stanley, p. 260.

² See descriptions by Milman, Geikie, and Stanley.

silence around the walls of the city. Their surprise must have given place to amusement, and finally to contempt. What could these fanatical people mean by such a procession? It is true, and they learned it with wonder, that these invaders had crossed the swollen river Jordan, and they doubtless regarded this achievement as a miracle strangely wrought; but the taking of Jericho would be quite another matter. They considered themselves entirely safe behind their strong walls, with their full supply of provisions, and with their trained soldiers; they believed that they were thus able to defy the assaults of almost any foe. If amused or terror-stricken at the first approach of the conquerors of Gilead and Bashan, they would now be only amused and would soon cease to be at all alarmed as, day by day, they watched the strange circuits made in total silence. They observe the priests bearing the Ark on their shoulders, while they hear the sound of trumpets. We do not know with certainty whether these trumpets were rams' horns or only of that shape. The number seven, however, impresses us at once as we read this narrative. There are seven priests; there are seven trumpets, and they go before the Ark for seven days, and on the seventh day they go around the city seven times.¹ Now the panic of the people gives place to confidence. Nothing is farther from their minds than that the walls are to give way, and that their enemies are to enter the city in triumph. For six successive days the mysterious marching goes on, and no voice is heard from the vast army, no sound but the shrill notes of the trumpets. On the last day six rounds are made; the seventh is begun, and it is now proceeding; they have neared the close of the last round and the whole army suddenly sends up a tremendous shout. Immediately the walls of the city fall flat, and the triumphant invaders, flushed with victory and deeply conscious of the divine presence and power, rush over the walls and through the streets among the defenseless and flying people. Some have supposed that natural agencies in the form of earthquakes or volcanic convulsions contributed to the falling of the walls.² We know that such convulsions were not uncommon in the Jordan valley. But the marvel is that the convulsions should occur at the right moment in the attack upon the city. Even though it should be proved that natural agencies were employed, the supernatural element is by no means thus eliminated. If ever there was a time when miracles were appropriate in the history of God's people, it was then. These miracles really form a part of the series which began with the plagues of Egypt, was continued in the crossing of the Red Sea, in the guidance of the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, and in the daily supply of manna. It was the time of the establishment of a new epoch in the kingdom of God, and it was fitting that he should surround it with glorious evidences of his presence and power. God, in accomplishing his great purposes, may use any number of secondary causes; but his presence is clearly seen in the use of these causes at the right time and for the accomplishment of the determined end. God's people in later days, through inspired psalmists, sang of the glory of this victory, giving all the praise to God, whose right hand and whose holy arm had gotten him and them the victory. Joshua himself was profoundly impressed with the idea that Jehovah was leading his people. Before the city was attacked, the illustrious Being who appeared to him with a drawn sword in his hand answered Joshua's challenge with the assurance that he was the Captain of the Lord's host,³ and Joshua reverently threw himself at his feet awaiting his commands and conscious of the divine Presence.

A terrible fate awaited the inhabitants of Jericho; fearful sternness was to be manifested toward this doomed people. This city had been laid under the ban; it was devoted wholly to the Lord. Everything in it, therefore, was slaughtered—not merely human beings, but also the beasts of burden. Not a single person, save Rahab and her relatives, was spared. The precious metals were consecrated to the Lord, but all else, including cattle, houses, furniture, everything was consumed in one fearful sacrifice. Joshua further pronounced a terrible curse

¹ Joshua vi, 4.
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² See King, in his "Morsels of Criticism," III, 287, 305, mentioned by Stanley.

³ Joshua v, 14.

over this scene of desolation ; and a malediction was uttered, also, upon the head of him who should rebuild this city, now reduced to utter desolation.¹ Israel was distinctly commanded to smite and utterly destroy the Canaanite race, to show no mercy, and to save alive nothing that breathed. Perhaps this command was not literally obeyed, in all cases ; for we know that, in regions named as entirely depopulated, strong Canaanite towns are later found. But, with whatever modifications we may understand this command, we know that the extermination was extensive, and that the penalty inflicted was terrible.

The fall of Jericho was of vast importance to the subsequent victories of the invaders ; it opened to them the passes into the neighboring hills. Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven, commanding them to go up and view the country. We do not know exactly where Ai was situated, but the command given by Joshua indicates that it was near the head of the ravine running up from the Jordan valley. The inhabitants of Ai were strongly fortified, and they drove the invaders backward, smiting them as they went down the declivity.² This defeat greatly startled Joshua and the children of Israel. The victory over Jericho had been so signal, that it was difficult to understand how an insignificant town like Ai should defeat the victorious invaders, and this surprising check of the two or three thousand men sent to take Ai led to serious inquiry. They were repulsed with the loss of thirty-six of their number ; should such defeats be multiplied the terror of the people would at once pass away, and Israel would be at a great disadvantage. Joshua and the elders of the people rent their clothes, put dust on their heads and cast themselves in wonder, inquiry, and penitence before the Ark the whole day ;³ and all the people were on the point of being panic-stricken. But careful inquiry revealed the cause of their defeat. The spoils of Jericho had been devoted to destruction ; and the divine command had been disobeyed by one man. This man was Achan, and he was of the tribe of Judah. He had taken some gold and silver, and a Babylonian mantle, literally "a mantle of Shinar," of beautiful appearance, and of great value.⁴ His offense was twofold : it was a breach of military discipline, and also an act of religious disobedience. Joshua fully realized that he could not allow his soldiers to enrich themselves with the plunder of Jericho. Should he yield at this point, all discipline would soon be destroyed, and the holy enthusiasm and lofty patriotism of the people would be wanting. Achan could not induce himself to burn this robe or to throw the gold and silver into the treasury of the Lord. Foolish man ! Wicked man ! Did he think that Jehovah did not see his act nor know his heart ? As a consequence of his guilt, Israel was defeated. No man sins alone. One man's act may involve his family, his city, his nation in the consequences of his evil conduct. By a most skillful process of elimination Achan was selected by lot out of all the people as the guilty man. The lot fell on the tribe of Judah, then on the family of the Zarahites, then on the household of Zabdi, and then of that household on Achan, the son of Carmi.⁵ His guilt was confessed, and the righteous wrath of Jehovah was inflicted. Achan, his sons, daughters, oxen, sheep, asses, tents, and all his possessions, were brought into a neighboring valley where the terrible punishment was inflicted upon him and them.⁶ He was crushed under a shower of stones and his body was burned with the furniture, the robes, and the beasts which he had owned, and then a huge cairn was raised over the spot where God's justice had been so signally vindicated. The place was called "the Valley of Achor," "the Valley of Troubling."⁷ It is almost certain that Achan's family shared in his guilt, and so shared in his punishment. By a natural law, whose operations are seen to this day, a man's family shares in his social honors, political preferments, and intellectual achievements ; and by the same law his family must suffer, to this hour, in his wrong-doing of whatever kind. This law is as universal as gravitation ; it is ancient as man ; it is eternal as God.

¹ Joshua vi, 26.² Joshua vii, 5.³ Joshua vii, 6.⁴ Joshua vii, 21.⁵ Joshua vii, 16-18.⁶ Joshua vii, 24.⁷ Joshua vii, 26.

The divine punishment having been thus inflicted upon Achan, Joshua was assured of the divine presence,¹ should he make a fresh attack upon Ai. He, therefore, placed by night 5,000 men in ambush far up the ravine between Ai and Bethel, and thus showed that now he had formed a better estimate of his enemy's strength than on the former occasion. And in another of the deep gorges, which abound in the district, he concealed 30,000 men, and approached the city. The men of Ai, emboldened by their former success, came out to meet them; then the Israelites, pretending to be panic-stricken, fled and the men of Ai pursued. The hidden troops, seeing their opportunity, dashed into the city, the gates being left open and undefended, and set it on fire. This having been done, Joshua's men came out at the front gate to attack the garrison as it rushed back, and Joshua, facing about, also attacked them. The pretended retreat became a deadly attack both in front and rear, and the garrison was slain to the last man, 12,000 warriors of Canaan having fallen, and of Ai nothing remained but blackened stones.² The king alone was taken alive, the people having been exterminated, and before night he was hanged on one of the trees near the town. A heap of stones marked the spot where the king's body was cast, after hanging for a day upon a cross. The Israelites in this case were permitted to retain the spoil and cattle. Soon Bethel, also, two miles distant, fell into their hands.

The time was now ripe for an assembly of the people, and for a renewal of their vows of fealty to God. God had given command to Moses that the tribes should assemble at Shechem.³ This place was in the center of the land, and was already sacred in the associations of the people. There they were to hear once more their obligations to God and their duty to one another. At Shechem, Abraham and Jacob had pitched their tents, and there Jacob had purchased the field in which the bones of Joseph were to be placed, according to the command received by their forefathers hundreds of years before.⁴ We, therefore, see the nation, including women and children, and even the representatives of other races, going on the pilgrimage from the banks of Jordan at Gilgal to the space between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. There, also, was the well Jacob had dug, and the oak beneath which he had buried the idolatrous images and other valuables belonging to his family.⁵ Attention has often been called to the fact that this is, perhaps, the most beautiful spot in all Palestine. The valley lies north and south, with the width of from one-quarter to one-half a mile; it is between the twin mountains Ebal and Gerizim, whose summits are two miles apart, although their bases are so near. This valley is one of nature's own great and glorious cathedrals. It was a fit place, alike because of its intrinsic beauty and its historical associations, for a great assembly of the chosen people. No fewer, it is said, than eighty springs supply the rivulets which pour down the slopes, clothing the glen with a garment of greenness and beauty. Here are gardens musical with many birds. Here are the fig, the walnut, the orange, the lemon, the pomegranate, and many other shrubs, while vines and plums fill the scene with rich foliage and luxuriant fruit. Here is Gerizim, rising a thousand feet above the valley "in a huge dome of chalk," whose base is hollowed out into many caves. Dark blue limestone ridges rise with various levels to the summit. On the north stands Ebal, rising in a gentler slope of steel-blue rocks, with cliffs 200 feet higher than those of Gerizim. On the north are many springs. Flowers of many colors and varieties spring up amid the luxuriant grass. The atmosphere is filled with particles of vapor rising from the numerous springs, making the air soft, hazy, and beautiful to an unusual degree. This is really the paradise of Palestine. This valley is a dream of beauty as compared with most other parts of the land. Here, in later times, came one greater than Joshua. It was at Nablus, the modern representative of Shechem, that Jesus sat by the well at the noonday hour and spoke of the water of life to the woman of Samaria.

¹ Joshua viii, 1. ² Joshua viii, 25. ³ Deuteronomy xi, 29.

⁴ See Geikie's fine description, "Hours with the Bible," II, p. 410.

⁵ Genesis xxxv, 4.

A sublime sight greets us as we gaze back upon the great assembly gathered under the direction of Joshua. He selected huge stones, covered them with a coating of plaster, inscribed on them an abstract of the law, and then placed them on Mount Ebal. Here, also, an altar of unhewn stones was raised, which was consecrated by burnt sacrifices and peace offerings. The descendants of Jacob, by his lawful wives, took their place on Mount Ebal; his descendants from the handmaids of Leah and Rachel, with Reuben, stood on the slopes of Mount Gerizim. Six tribes were on one height; six on the other. It is common to represent Ebal as a barren, stony, and desolate crag, and Gerizim as a lovely, fertile mountain with luxuriant verdure, abundant streams, and shady groves. If this difference between the mountains was real, Ebal would tell how God would smite the disobedient, and Gerizim how he would bless the obedient with abundance and happiness. The priests with the Ark occupied the valley between the two hills, and about them were the elders, officers, and judges of the nation. The great host are now assembled and are awaiting a public proclamation. The silence is broken as the Law given by Moses is read aloud to the vast multitudes. The voice of the reader ceases, and the tribes on Mount Ebal, Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali, respond to the readings of the curses on disobedience, with a loud "Amen;" those on Mount Gerizim, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin, to the recital of the blessings for obedience, respond with a loud "Amen." This was a scene whose impression was as lasting as it was profound and solemn.¹ Tests in modern times have been frequently made at this place which have clearly shown that the voice of a reciter can still be heard by many thousands gathered in this valley and on the slopes of the enclosing hills. Indeed, some tests have proved that speech a little louder than ordinary conversation can be heard perfectly by persons stationed on opposite sides of the valley. It is thus easy to see with what perfect ease the commandments could have been recited and heard. Dr. Geikie calls attention to the fact that such a scene enacted about 1,200 years before the first Punic War, and 1,000 years before Socrates, is, indeed, unique in the history of the world. No other nation ever pledged itself in this solemn way to a religious life so high and holy. The curses as well as the blessings are peculiar to Israel; they include especially such sins as idolatry, disobedience to parents, unkindness to the blind, to strangers, widows, and orphans, and the removal of the land-mark of a neighbor. The laws even of to-day, in the most enlightened nations of the earth, have not reached so unselfish, so lofty, and so noble a standard. The inscriptions on plaster, because of the dryness of the climate, were as lasting as they would be in some countries if carved in granite. Dr. Thomson tells us that inscriptions on the rocks at Sinai, though only mere scratches, are perfectly distinct, after the lapse of thousands of years; and in Egypt and Palestine inscriptions and paintings on plaster are as distinct as when made thousands of years ago.

This form of consecration having taken place, Jehovah having thus been recognized by all the people, and having taken Palestine in his name, the people returned, doubtless with a deep sense of the solemnity of the occasion, to Gilgal, which was still the headquarters of the tribes. As we shall see, the peace now enjoyed was to be rudely disturbed; and fierce battles were yet to be fought, and great victories were yet to be won.

¹ Dean Milman, "History of the Jews," I, p. 255.

CHAPTER IV.

STANDING STILL OF SUN AND MOON.

THE success of Israel at Jericho, Ai, and elsewhere, caused a general panic among the inhabitants of Palestine; they were ready to abandon all their possessions in order to escape the power of the advancing Hebrews. Indeed, it seems evident that a considerable proportion of the population of Central Palestine fled before they were attacked. The subdivision of the people into small communities made them incapable of united action, and the lack of organized troops caused general demoralization. The way was now opened for great triumphs against the people of the land. The great body of the Hebrews still remained encamped at Gilgal. Soon a company of travel-stained men with moldy provisions, rent wine-skins, and worn shoes, presented themselves as if they had come from a distant country.¹ They declared that the fame of the Hebrew conquests had reached their remote land, and that they had come to offer their submission. The Israelites entered into a treaty without due inquiry, and they soon found that they had been imposed upon by the inhabitants of Gibeon, a Canaanitish city, which lay at no great distance from the base of Beth-horon, and immediately opposite the pass of Ai. Naturally this city would soon have fallen in any case into the hands of the Israelites. The device of the Gibeonites was most quaint, simple, and, withal, strategic. They pretended that they had not heard of the victories of Israel in the Wilderness and in Palestine, but simply of the great conquests made long ago over the Egyptians,² and east of the Jordan. The Israelites were not without their suspicions, but finally they made a treaty with them, and, although it was made under false representations, it was held sacred by Joshua and his people.³ The lives of the Gibeonites were spared, but they were doomed to a kind of slavery to the officiating priesthood, and in that condition their descendants were found long afterward. David was loyal to the vow which Joshua made to the Gibeonites, and this adherence to plighted faith is worthy of all praise in the careers of both Joshua and David. Dean Stanley calls attention to it in contrast with the example of so-called Christians, who have frequently refused to keep faith with those they called heretics and infidels. He cites the case of Cardinal Julian Cæsarini, who, in an elaborate argument, urged Ladislaus of Hungary, when tidings had arrived of unexpected help for the Christian host, to break the solemn compact he had made with Amurath II., but, as the result proved, to the king's undoing; for Ladislaus, acting upon the cardinal's advice, only hurried his army to destruction. Joshua might have found an excuse for breaking faith with these Gibeonite deceivers; but although the congregation murmured against the princes, the latter said, "We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel: now, therefore, we may not touch them."⁴ And their lives were spared, although, as we have seen, they were, with their own consent, subjected to tributary service.⁵ This incident has given a name to one of the popular novels of Walter Besant, whose writings have done so much to ameliorate the condition of the poor of London, of England, and of America.

The capitulation of Gibeon brought a crisis on the Amorite kings. A league was formed, including five princes of the Amoritish race headed by Adoni-zedek. The purpose of this league was twofold; it was to revenge the defection of Gibeon and to arrest, if possible, the further progress of these triumphant invaders. The five kings, or princes, united in the league

¹ Joshua ix, 3, *et seq.*

² Joshua ix, 9.

³ Joshua ix, 15, 16.

⁴ Joshua ix, 19.

⁵ Joshua ix, 23.

were: The king of Jebus, the king of Hebron, of Jarmuth, of Lachish, and Eglon.¹ These banded together, hastened into the hill country and invested Gibeon. The elders sent hastily to Joshua for help.² Encouraged by Jehovah, he responded to their call for assistance and suddenly broke up his camp, made a rapid night march, at the head of a large force of picked men, and before sunrise reached the foot of the hill on which Gibeon stands.³ The sight of Joshua and his men struck terror into the foe. Uttering their terrible war cry, they fell on the Canaanites, utterly defeating them, and pursuing them with great slaughter. Much depended on the suddenness of Joshua's blow. On a former occasion it took three days to go from Gilgal to Gibeon; now, by a forced march, he made the journey in a night. It was all-important that he should break in pieces this confederation even before it was fully formed. This march and victory give Joshua a high place as a military leader. Jehovah himself threw Israel's enemies into confusion and defeat. They fled in frantic haste toward Beth-horon. A tremendous hail-storm increased the panic and added greatly to the numbers of the slain.⁴ Jehovah is represented as discomfiting them and hurling the huge hailstones upon them as they fled. It is said that more died from the hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword.⁵ It was on this occasion that the memorable event, known as the standing still of the sun and moon in their respective courses at the prayer of Joshua, took place. Never before nor since was there a day, according to popular belief, when Jehovah had so listened to the voice of a man, and Jehovah had so fought for Israel. This was one of the great battles of history; it largely determined the fortunes of the world and the Church. The five kings finally escaped from their pursuers and hid in a cave near Makkedah;⁶ but they were discovered and placed under guard, and, after the pursuit was over and the remnant of their scattered forces had escaped to their own cities, the doom of these kings was pronounced—a fate sufficiently horrible to fill the mind with sadness even to this hour. Apparently they had not raised a hand against the Israelites, but they were dragged out of their place of concealment and humiliated by having five of the Israelite chieftains place their feet upon the necks of these kings, in token of the complete triumph of the one and the absolute overthrow of the other.⁷ They were then put to death, and for the rest of the day the five bodies were hung upon five trees;⁸ when they were finally thrown into the cave which they had chosen as a place of refuge, and a heap of stones was raised at the cave's mouth to preserve the memory of their destruction.⁹

No one could now stand before Joshua. Makkedah was taken, and its inhabitants perished. The same lot befell many in southern Canaan. Indeed, the slaughter was complete, the victory was almost unlimited. City after city was reduced, and tribe after tribe was destroyed. Joshua finally returned to Gilgal, having subdued the south as far as Gaza,¹⁰ with the exception of some very strong fortresses.

Joshua now turned his attention to the invasion of northern Canaan. The princes of the north, like those of the south, united their forces and strove to expel the Israelites. They organized a powerful confederacy and assembled their countless hosts near the waters of Merom.¹¹ They derived great strength from the number and character of their war chariots. In the central plains and valleys of Palestine cavalry and chariots could engage in battle with greater effect than in the more mountainous districts in the south. Joshua, however, with the rapidity and vigor of a Cromwell, fell upon them and in a single battle decided the fate of that portion of the land. He burned their chariots and ham-strung their horses.¹² Hazor was the headquarters of the confederacy, and was the first place to fall before the power of Joshua, and its inhabitants were put to death; with the exception of the cities situated on the hills, all the other cities were burned. This war is spoken of as lasting from five to seven years, and during

¹ Joshua x, 3, *et seq.*² Joshua x, 6.³ Joshua x, 8-10.⁴ Joshua x, 10.⁵ Joshua x, 11.⁶ Joshua x, 16.⁷ Joshua x, 24.⁸ Joshua x, 26, 27.⁹ "The Bible for Learners," by Drs. Oort, Hooykaas, and Kuenen.¹⁰ Joshua x, 40, 41.¹¹ Joshua xi, 5.¹² Joshua xi, 6-9.



JOSHUA COMMANDING THE SUN TO STAND STILL.

this period seven nations — the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Hivites, Perizzites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites — were overthrown, though not extirpated, and thirty-one kings were defeated.¹ We are not surprised to know that the Israelites finally grew weary of the war and longed to enjoy the comforts of peace. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh were dismissed, at their urgent request, to their families and possessions on the east of the Jordan. But, although Israel's foes were defeated, they were not destroyed; their conquest was incomplete. Many of them still remained within the territory and were ready on every occasion to harass their conquerors, and were constantly leading the Israelites into the barbarous practices and licentious rites of their degrading idolatries.

Two questions are now to be answered: What can be said in explanation of the apparent arresting of the sun and moon in their respective courses? What is the justification of the policy of extermination, commanded by Jehovah and executed by Joshua?

What is the significance of Joshua's command to the sun and moon to stand still in their respective courses? This is a vexed and a vexing question. Jewish and Christian commentators have found this to be one of the most perplexing passages in the Bible. Was it a stupendous miracle, or can it be otherwise explained in harmony with the language of the narrative? That God could perform a miracle, however great, we do not for a moment doubt; we place no limit whatever to his power. It is easy for God to introduce into the boundless ranges of creation laws with which we are not familiar, and whose introduction seems to us a miracle of the most stupendous kind. We do not hesitate to say that God could make the clock of the universe stop, without jarring the mechanism, by introducing laws now unknown to us. He certainly could produce an apparent stoppage of the machinery in entire harmony with recognized law. This he might do through the laws of refraction, as many have already supposed, or in some other way. We know that by various processes we get the after-glow of sunset in the diverse forms familiar to travelers on lofty mountains and in high latitudes; and this might be done without resorting to the violent methods which some have adopted in explanation of this narrative. But is it necessary to introduce even this modified view of the miracle supposed to have been wrought? We have no hesitancy in accepting a miracle which has been wrought by God; but we are unwilling to allow commentators to introduce their imaginary miracles into the sacred narrative. God, for wise purposes, has seen fit to introduce miracles into both the Old and the New Testament; but he has apparently reduced them to a minimum. Was there, in the ordinary sense of the word, any miracle here? Many able writers, whom no one would suspect of being opposed to revealed religion, doubt not only the extent but even the existence of a miracle in this case. They do not suppose that there was even a preternatural refraction of the sun's rays after it had really gone below the horizon. They regard the description as that of a highly wrought poetical passage taken from the Book of Jasher. Let us look carefully at the evidence in favor of this opinion.

The Book of Jasher, or "the Upright," appears to be a collection of eulogistic odes in praise of national heroes. Some, indeed, have supposed that it refers to some book or books of the Bible itself. It is mentioned² when the reference is to teaching the use of the bow. It has been suggested, as an explanation, that Joshua besought God that the black clouds of the storm driving up from the sea should not blot out the sun, and thus bring on night before his victory was complete.³ When, according to this explanation, the sun shone out again from the tempest, and the moon stood clear in the sky, his prayer was supposed to be answered. Maimonides, whom Hengstenberg and many other Christian commentators follow, regarded it as simply a poetic way of saying that the day was long enough for the Israelites to win the victory and to slaughter their foes. The early rabbis were almost unanimous in believing that the sun literally stood still; but like the Christian fathers they differed among themselves as to the length

¹ Joshua xii, 24.² II. Samuel i, 18.³ Rev. Samuel Cox.

of time that it remained above the horizon.¹ Some said that it so remained twenty-four hours, and after its setting that the moon still remained stationary. Some supposed it remained forty-eight hours, others thirty-six hours, and some twenty-eight hours. Some commentators favor what they call a "subjective" prolongation of the day, believing that the day was simply supposed by the Israelites to have been lengthened, they being too busily engaged to note the time. Still others suppose that the lightning which accompanied the hailstorm was prolonged into the night, giving the night the appearance of day; and that the hailstorm was caused by the standing still of the sun. These latter suppositions are among the curiosities of Biblical interpretation.² Which, then, of these views are the more probable? As already implied, we distinctly dismiss, in our interpretation, all ideas of the impossibility of such a miracle. God holds the waters in the hollow of his hand; he metes out the heavens with a span.³ He could certainly arrest the progress of a great universe, though it were ten thousand times greater than it is. Man can stop, in harmony with its own laws, a machine vastly greater than himself. Cannot the Creator stop, by the introduction of higher laws, the machine which he has set in motion?⁴ It is simply a question as to whether or not he did interpose his power and perform a miracle in this case; and it may be a fair question as to whether so stupendous a miracle were necessary or were likely to be performed by God who is always economical in his adaptation of means to ends. The success of the Israelites was so great, and the destruction of their enemies so immense, that it may well have been their belief that the day was lengthened miraculously for their advantage. It can readily be seen that those who believe in a literal miracle have some reason for that belief, because such a miracle would give a deathblow to the prevailing superstition of the country connected with the worship of the sun and moon. There is something wonderfully sublime in supposing that the deities of the conquered people were thus arrested in their progress, and made witnesses of the discomfiture and overthrow of their worshipers. But we are not compelled to resort to any such interpretation. We need not regard Joshua's prayer as more literal than the apostrophe of Isaiah, "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would flow down at thy presence."⁵ It is, perhaps, not to be regarded as more literal than the statement of Deborah and Barak that, "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera";⁶ not more literal than the words, "the hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord";⁷ "the mountains skipped like rams,"⁸ and "All the trees of the field shall clap their hands."⁹ Joshua's words remind us of Wellington's at Waterloo, "Oh, that Blücher or night would come!" There is in the "Iliad" a prayer by Agamemnon, as quoted by Geikie, not unlike the prayer of Joshua as here recorded:

"Jove greatest, Jove most glorious, sky-dweller, cloud bedight,
Let not the sun nor darkness fall and wrap the world in night,
Till Priam's stately palace I cast in ruin low."

Then, again, the words of the original have been strangely misunderstood. Literally rendered, they give an idea differing from that usually supposed to be taught: "Then spake Joshua to Jehovah, in the day when Jehovah gave the Amorites before the sons of Israel, and he said before the eyes of Israel, Sun, in Gibeon, be still! and moon in the vale of Ajalon. And the sun was still, and the moon stood till a nation was avenged of its enemies. Is not this written in the Book of the Upright? And the sun stood in the midst of heaven, and did not haste to go down, as a perfect day. And there was not a day like that before or after it, for Jehovah to hearken to the voice of a man, for Jehovah fought for Israel."¹⁰ The meaning of the author, it is clear, is involved in some obscurity; but it is quite certain that

¹ Introduction to Joshua in "Pulpit Commentary," p. 20.

² Michaelis and König, cited by Keil and quoted in Introduction to "Pulpit Commentary."

³ Isaiah xl, 12.

⁴ See Keil and Delitzsch "Commentary on Joshua and Judah," p. 112.

⁵ Isaiah lxiv. 1.

⁶ Judges v, 20.

⁷ Psalm xcvii, 5.

⁸ Psalm cxiv, 4.

⁹ Isaiah lv, 12.

¹⁰ Translation in Introduction to "Pulpit Commentary."

it is not positively affirmed that the sun remained in the heavens a day, or even an hour, longer than its usual time. What is stated is that Joshua, in impassioned and poetic words, commanded that the sun and the moon should not set until his work was completed, and that this result was secured. The sun and moon were witnesses of his great deeds. They held their courses until his triumph was complete. These words are clearly seen to be poetic expressions. God was with Israel, and they won a glorious victory over their foes. Great states were banded against Israel, with all the appliances of warfare, and yet they were defeated in a single day with tremendous slaughter. It was eminently fitting that Israel should embody such a glorious victory in their national songs, and relate how the sun did not set until the triumph was won, and how the moon continued her light until the defeated remnants of the mighty army were driven from the fields.¹ It would be strange, if this were a miracle, that it should not be mentioned in many other parts of Scripture among the great things that God did for Israel. No allusion to this event is found except in one obscure passage.² The omission of such an allusion seems decisive as to the view which inspired writers took of this passage. The importance of the passage seems to have been greatly exaggerated both by the friends and foes of revealed religion. Josephus makes but slight allusion to this supposed miracle, saying only "that the day was increased, lest the night should check the zeal of the Hebrews"; and the Samaritan Book of Joshua simply says that "the day was prolonged at his prayer." The traditional interpretation of this distinctly poetic passage invested it with alarming importance when the Copernican system was set forth by Galileo.³ Around this miracle fierce ecclesiastical battles have been fought—battles almost as important as that fought by Joshua himself. The Vatican has had its share in these battles, and has had to confess its repeated mistakes. We may fearlessly affirm that there can be no collision between science and Scripture when both are rightly interpreted. The explanation of Kepler, quoted by Dean Stanley, deeply interests all students of the passage.⁴ "They will not understand that the only thing which Joshua prayed for, was that the mountains might not intercept the sun from him. Besides, it had been very unreasonable at that time to think of astronomy, or of the errors of sight; for if anyone had told him that the sun could not really move on the valley of Ajalon, but only in relation to sense, would not Joshua have answered that his desire was that the day might be prolonged, so it were by any means whatsoever?" It is time that the great fabric of argument that has gathered around this passage should fall to the ground. It has been somewhat mistranslated; it is possibly an interpolation; it is at least a quotation. In no case ought it longer to trouble devout students of the Word of God.

The progress of physical science in our day has entirely changed the earlier relation of miracles to divine revelation. They are not now considered to be of special evidential value. They were once believed to contribute greatly to the establishment of a divine revelation, and to the support of the Christian religion; but now many affirm that they are objections to faith in the Bible and obstacles to the progress of Christianity.⁵ The universality and invariability of physical laws, which have been emphasized in recent times, make any departure from the observed course of nature somewhat startling. What once were considered wonderful portents are now seen, in many cases, to be but the natural result of higher laws, of whose existence, until lately, we had no knowledge. There are those who would put the miraculous events of the Bible into the same category with the prodigies of heathen fables, or with the apparitions of Lourdes, Knock, and Ste. Anne de Beaupré. We may well believe that miracles are necessary to attract attention to new developments of religious truth. Miracles have been frequently called the great bell which summons the congregation, but after it has assembled it may hear

¹ For opposite view see Dr. Crosby, "Joshua," and Dr. Blaikie, "Joshua."

² Habakkuk iii, 11.

³ Stanley, "Jewish Church," I, p. 275.

⁴ Stanley, p. 277.

⁵ Introduction to Joshua in "Pulpit Commentary," p. 15, *et seq.*

something better than the noise of the bell. So with the progress of thought there is constantly a tendency to reduce the miraculous element to the lowest possible point. That element was certainly present during the Jewish history previous to the dawn of Christianity; that element most gloriously marked the birth of the Christian faith and the establishment of Christian truth in so many nations of the earth. It is not surprising that the presence of Jesus Christ among men should have been accompanied by unusual manifestations of the divine presence and power; but after his ascension it was to be expected that the miraculous element should, to a great degree, disappear from sight and thought. He had given the fullest manifestations of power necessary to the establishment of his truth.¹ All that man needed for his salvation was now made known. Faith in the power and mercy of God was able to transform character and to fit men for heaven. The modern miracles of the Roman Church will not bear the test of careful scrutiny. They are neither needed nor established. They tend greatly to throw suspicion upon the true miracles of Judaism and of apostolic days. The supposed miracles of healing, so frequently quoted by Roman writers, are paralleled by equally striking examples of healing on the part of devout Protestant churches or other religious organizations; and these, in turn, are paralleled by supposed cases of healing on the part of men and communities making no claim to any power but magnetism or some other occult science. As to the question of the possibility of miracles, we are free to say that when we admit God we may unquestionably admit all that God sees necessary to be done for the revelation of his will and the establishment of his Church; and there really is neither small nor great with God. All the discoveries of modern science are making it easier than ever before to believe in the existence of God and in the manifestations of his power which have been usually called miraculous; the universality and invariability of law do not eliminate God. Back of all laws is God, and through them he works. Back of all forms of evolution is God as the great Evolver; and nothing can be evolved which was not first involved. Invariable forces and laws are, after all, most plastic in the hands of men moving in harmony with intelligent knowledge of these laws and forces. The will of man is constantly working upon physical agencies in obedience to invariable laws. The hand which holds up a book checks for the time being the law of gravitation by introducing another law. The law of preservation in salt checks the law of destruction in meat. The higher law controls the lower.

We make no greater claim for God in relation to miracles than we may rightly make for man in relation to scientific progress in our own day. The discovery of electricity, in its various applications, is almost miraculous. What to-day is a truism was yesterday an unknown phenomenon. The finger of God seems to drive the trolley cars through our streets; and we are to make in the near future discoveries still more marvelous than those which have been made in the recent past. To-day thoughts instantaneously leap from America to England, 3,000 miles under the mighty deep. Here is what once would have been called a miracle. Here is an adaptation of law which is not miraculous, but perfectly natural. We are greatly in need of a new definition of miracles. To-day, Paris speaks to London and to Brussels through the telephone. To-day, New York speaks to Chicago, in round numbers 1,000 miles away, through the telephone. The opening of this long-distance telephone marked an era in the history of invention. To-day telegraphs girdle the world, making it a whispering gallery. To-day telautographs reproduce writing between London and Paris and other cities hundreds of miles away; and the page-printing telegraph sends messages in perfect typescript. If man can talk to man 1,000 miles away, who will dare say that man cannot talk to God and that God cannot talk to man? Telepathy may yet explain thousands of secrets now profound mysteries. Perhaps communication with God may be in a truly glorious sense most natural, God speaking to us and we to God in perfect harmony with natural laws now unknown by us. We are

¹ Introduction to Joshua in "Pulpit Commentary."

discovering new laws governing locomotion. We shall discover still more wonderful laws, in these and other respects, before many years shall pass. We shall cross the Atlantic in five days, propelled by steam; soon, perhaps, in half that time propelled by electricity; and not much later, perhaps, we shall cross the ocean in air ships in journeys reckoned by hours instead of days. We have brought lightning from the clouds; we use the sun to print photographs. We are able to register the amount of heat generated by the flash of a firefly. We may yet be able to tell the amount of good or evil which men exert over those who come near them. Our discoveries are so wonderful that they have ceased to excite wonder. Who will dare to say what God can do, without violating law, when man has accomplished such wonders in harmony with higher laws, lately discovered? All true science is the handmaid of true faith; all scientific discoveries make faith in God easy; and revelations which once were difficult, are now explicable and simple. Surely it is not so wonderful that God could arrest the course of a river like the Jordan, when man can drain seas in Holland, transforming them into fruitful fields. Surely it is not so wonderful that God should make a path through the midst of the Red Sea, when man can achieve the wonders of modern times. Surely it is not so wonderful that the Creator of heaven and earth should cause the walls of Jericho to fall to the ground, and that, perhaps, by perfectly natural means, pressing into his service laws with whose existence and operations we are not familiar, when a little girl by touching a button caused an explosion of the rocks in the East River near New York, or when one could cause an explosion which would lay Chicago, New York, Paris, or London in ruins. Who are we that we talk about what God cannot do? Who are most of us that we presume to talk of what man cannot do? Who are even our greatest scientists who presume to deny what greater scientists may accomplish in the near future? The discoveries of science really render faith in miracles easy, natural, and, one might almost say, inevitable. These discoveries put the defense of revelation into the same category with the defense of modern achievements by the discoveries of laws only recently known and employed. The discovery of these laws in these later days has brought man into a position in which the vastly sublimer actions of God, in what we call miracles, are seen to be only the result of the application of higher laws which, for the time being, hold in check the usual operations of lower laws with which we are familiar. It could easily be shown that in one sense our Lord's miracles were natural; they certainly were not contra-natural, even though we may say they were supernatural. The man who opposes a divine revelation because of its affirmations regarding natural phenomena, might with equal propriety oppose the affirmations of modern science regarding any phenomenal events with which he did not chance to be familiar. The fact is that all true science lays its crown at the feet of the Almighty Creator, and becomes the handmaid of divine revelation. In the presence alike of true science and divine revelation, human ignorance should be modest, obedient, and reverent.

CHAPTER V.

MORAL DIFFICULTIES IN BOOK OF JOSHUA.

IN the judgment of many critics, the moral difficulties in the Book of Joshua are greater than the astronomical, or the other miraculous phenomena. Why did God permit, or command, the extermination of the Canaanites? This question many objectors to divine revelation have asked, and they have answered it with serious reflection upon the Bible and the God of the Bible. Several considerations ought to be mentioned at this point to enable us the better to understand this whole question. The history of the partial extermination of the Canaanites is brought out very clearly in connection with the successive massacres following the battle of Beth-horon. We might have considered this matter at that point in the history; but there will be a gain in commenting on these difficulties in their relation to one another. Most persons who read the closing portions of the Book of Joshua are greatly confused by the divine sanction of the cruelties connected with these fearful massacres. One naturally asks, How could such massacres occur without demoralizing the people who were humanly responsible for their commission? How could a book claiming to be divine even seem to indorse such terrible slaughter? Some persons have endeavored to explain the matter by a partial denial of the facts; while others have attempted to treat this part of the history as if it were a mere allegory. And still others have illustrated the divine method by a reference to the destruction of human life in epidemics, in earthquakes, and in other great natural convulsions.

The extermination of the Canaanites was in obedience to the command of God. In Deuteronomy we read, "Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth; but thou shalt utterly destroy them;"¹ and the reason assigned is, "that they teach you not to do after all their abominations."² Is such a command in harmony with the divine attributes of justice and mercy? It ought to be borne in mind that God's revelation of himself is given in sundry parts, according as men are able to receive the truth. God has to do—it is said reverently—the best he can with the material in his hand. The age of Joshua was particularly marked by ignorance of the character of God, and was correspondingly characterized by a low ethical standard among men. Men were savage and brutal; acts were allowed, and even commanded, at that time which would have been utterly forbidden under the Gospel of Christ. Men had not then learned to say, "Our Father who art in Heaven."³ They thought of God as a God of strict justice; and no other thought was then fully made known. The spirit of mercy inculcated by Christ was entirely unknown. It is thus quite unfair to carry back from the New Testament the morality it teaches, and to apply it to the conduct of men living in this early age.

It was also an age when might made right. Property was not an individual possession, but rather that of the community. And as a consequence, communities rather than individuals were held responsible for the acts performed. Punishment of the nations was, therefore, in harmony with the conditions of life and the form of justice then prevailing. Joshua thought himself the minister of God in punishing the sins of the Canaanites. The people of Canaan might have been punished, as were those of Sodom and Gomorrah, by a special divine retribution, without the sword of Joshua; but such punishments would have been less instructive than the method employed. The Israelites were in a sense responsible for the morality of the

¹ Deuteronomy xiii, 15, xx, 16.

² Deuteronomy xx, 16-18.

³ Matthew vi, 9.

Canaanites, as for that of Israel; and no act of God could so impress the hatefulness of sin on the part of the Canaanites as the employment of the Israelites as his instrument in punishing their crimes.

It ought to be borne in mind, also, that the Canaanites were guilty of the most abominable crimes conceivable by the human mind—crimes heinous above those committed by others of their time. They sinned against the light of nature, against the examples of patriarchs of an earlier generation, and against the warnings given by God in the punishment of the cities of the plain. If it was wrong for God to punish the Canaanites by the sword of Joshua, it would have been wrong for him to punish them by an epidemic, pestilence, or other natural display of his righteous wrath. God certainly has permitted epidemics in all countries. He has also permitted massacres frequently to take place in connection with the movements of armies in all lands. When people sink into luxury and vice, they bring terrible punishment upon themselves, as the inevitable consequence of the laws of nature which they violate. Other conquerors, such as the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians, were far less merciful than was Joshua. The Greeks and Romans stained the progress of their armies by crimes from which Joshua was entirely free. These classic nations did not hesitate to dedicate captive women to the impure worship of Aphrodite or Mylitta. The violation of women and children was almost universal in the case of towns sacked by armies of the earlier heathen and even of the later Christian days. In later days the severities of the period of Joshua find many parallels in the bloodshed and lust which marked the steps of the victorious barbarians who destroyed the Roman power. Goths, Vandals, Huns, Bulgarians, and Turks frequently surpassed Joshua in their pitiless cruelties.¹ The conduct of the Duke of Alva, acting in the Netherlands in harmony with Philip II. of Spain and the Pope of Rome, was vastly more abominable, in its varied forms of atrocities, than were the conquests of Joshua over the Canaanites. How could God permit these barbarities in later and more enlightened days? How could God even apparently, by providential opportunities, indorse the commission of these awful crimes? How could God permit the horrible cruelties of the Spanish Inquisition? We do not answer one difficulty by suggesting others, but we show at least that the problem is not peculiar to the time of Joshua or to the revelations given in the Bible. If the God of revelation be cruel, the God of nature must be considered equally cruel; for nature inflicts its wrath upon weak women and harmless children even in our own time.²

It ought to be remembered, also, that the punishment inflicted by Joshua was not intended to gratify a cruel disposition on the part of Israel. All students of history know that the institutions and principles of the Israelites were vastly more humane than were those of the surrounding nations. In punishing the Canaanites God was expressing his stern indignation against abominable vice. These vices would, by the operation of natural laws, have brought upon any nation guilty of such practices a more cruel death than that inflicted by Joshua. We have only to turn to Leviticus³ to see the awful catalogue of abominations which, we are distinctly told, were committed by the men of the land.⁴ We are also told that God abhorred the defilements of the people.⁵ Some forms of their crimes were long punishable by death in Great Britain and her colonies, when the laws were strictly enforced. No words are too strong to express the abhorrence which all men ought to feel, and which pure men do feel, against the nameless crimes committed by these Canaanites. The power of the women of the land to lead Israel into sin was sufficiently and terribly proved; indeed, there seemed to be no means of preserving Israel in purity but by the destruction of these impure seducers. As a matter of fact, whenever Israel refused to destroy these panders of vice, she herself lapsed into the

¹ Introduction to Joshua in "Pulpit Commentary."

² John Stuart Mill, in his "Essay on Nature," accepts this position. See Bishop Butler's use of this argument.

³ Leviticus xviii, 20.

⁴ Leviticus xviii, 23-30.

⁵ Leviticus xx, 23.

abominably idolatrous practices about her. In all such cases lust, cruelty, and bloodshed abounded, and soon innocent children were sacrificed on the altars of Moloch. Who will say that the utmost severity commanded by God and inflicted by Joshua was not, in the largest sense, the greatest kindness to the greatest number?

We ought also to remember, as has already been suggested, that the commands of God through Moses were greatly in advance of the moral education of the world at the time. We have often so dwelt upon the failure of the Israelites to carry out God's grand designs that we have not adequately appreciated their helpful influences. The history of the conquest of Palestine will compare favorably with the history of most other conquests throughout the world. Never was a leader of conquering armies less governed by selfish, personal, and ambitious ends than was Joshua. Placed alongside of Cæsar, Alexander, Charles V., Philip II., or even Napoleon Bonaparte,¹ Joshua appears conspicuous for his purity of heart, his unselfishness of aim, and his consideration for all the interests alike of conquerors and conquered. Men must always be judged with reference to the standard of morality of the times in which they lived. Moses and Joshua were far in advance of the moral standard of their age; they were the unworldly and the godly men of their time. The charge rightly made against Columbus is that he lived far below the highest standard of his time. The Jewish religion never introduced barbarism into the world; on the contrary, it greatly softened the spirit of cruelty wherever it was established.

It ought also to be observed that God had given the Canaanites repeated warnings of approaching judgment. Their religion, as we have seen, was impure and degrading almost beyond description. God was now to introduce the fullest manifestation of his kingdom yet made among men; and it was necessary that the foul heathenism of the nations should be destroyed. It was so abominable that when 1,500 years later it spread to Rome, the satirists of that day regarded its advent as an enormous calamity. The people of God, in order to establish a purer faith and to develop a nobler race, required a territory from which such evil influences were absent, and in which they might have the opportunity of exercising their noblest endeavors; but until the abominations of the heathen were removed entirely such development was an utter impossibility. God had given the Canaanites line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a great deal. When God has great purposes to accomplish in national life, he requires a properly prepared sphere in which to operate. Forty years had passed since the Red Sea was crossed. The people knew of God's wonders in Egypt, and of the victories over the kings of Gilead and Bashan. They knew how God claimed universal homage, and how he had opposed all forms of evil among the nations. They knew, also, how he had chastised the Hebrews for participating in the abominations of Baal-peor. Rahab distinctly informed the spies that she had known of God's mighty judgments, and of God's divine purposes regarding Palestine, and of God's sublime position as not only the God of Israel, but also "God in heaven above, and in earth beneath."²

It was the practice in that day among all nations, to put to death prisoners of war. The humanity of our time, as seen in the customs of war, is the development of thousands of years, and a similar spirit could not be expected in that early day. Dr. Arnold³ rightly teaches us that "the Israelites' sword, in its bloodiest executions, wrought a work of mercy for all the countries of the earth, to the very end of the world." Similar truths are illustrated in America. God had great purposes in the establishment of the American Republic. But in order that Pilgrim and Puritan fathers might have an appropriate sphere for planting and developing the great principles of American civilization and Christianity, the Indian had to be driven back from his former hunting grounds. The process has continued until this day. The Indian's territory was demanded for a higher civilization; and for that purpose, by various providential

¹ Introduction to Joshua in "Pulpit Commentary," p. 15.

² Joshua ii, 11.

³ "Dr. Arnold's Sermons," VI, 35-37.

combinations, it was taken. The Indian has been driven back, and back, almost to the other edge of the continent. The process will go on until he is either civilized or exterminated. Doubtless great cruelties have been practiced against the Indian on our own continent; doubtless solemn treaties have been broken, and the white man has been guilty of much injustice toward his red brother. Nevertheless, there is divine justice and an inevitable necessity in the operation of the law that the nations that will not submit to the highest civilization of their time shall by that very civilization be destroyed. The greatest good of the greatest number necessitates the execution of this apparently severe but universal and eternal law.

It ought, also, to be borne in mind that often apparent severity is the truest leniency in war. Instances are found frequently in modern times and in many lands. The conduct of the British armies in suppressing the Sepoy atrocities in the Indian mutiny is a case in point, although their terrible severity has sometimes shocked the world; but no doubt it contributed in the end to the decrease of sorrow and suffering, and to the speedy establishment of peace and prosperity. The same principle is illustrated in Cromwell's storming of Drogheda, in Ireland. He has sometimes been fiercely criticised for that terrible massacre, but Cromwell's act received justification not only in his own day, but in our time as well. Carlyle does not hesitate to affirm that, terrible as was Oliver's surgery, he believed that he simply inflicted the judgment of God, and prevented suffering by bringing the war to a speedy end, and so was more merciful than had he pursued a gentler course. Cromwell's own words are: "I am persuaded that this is a righteous judgment of God, and that it will tend to prevent the effusion of blood for the future." As a matter of fact, his sternness speedily ended the Irish war. Had the Israelites followed up their first successes by similar crushing victories, they would speedily have made themselves absolute masters of the whole of Palestine. But, unfortunately, they left their work half done, and they frequently and severely suffered as a consequence of their disobedience to God, and apparent sympathy with the Canaanites.

It ought still to be borne in mind, as already hinted, that the standard of moral character which is employed by some critics in judging of Joshua and these Old Testament heroes is derived from Christ and the New Testament. This course is manifestly unscientific, unphilosophic, and unhistoric; we ought not to carry back these standards of the New Testament and apply them to the conduct of Old Testament saints. Indeed, the tenderer men are, the more righteously indignant do they become against wrong wherever found. He is only a being of paste and putty whose anger does not flash out against crimes committed against God and men. Jesus was a terrible preacher of wrath against the hypocrites of his day. There are times in which the severest of the imprecatory psalms become the appropriate vehicles of the expression of the thought of the most righteous souls. The Psalmist could say of the enemies of God, "I hate them with a perfect hatred."¹ Christian charity may not use such language in our day, but the tenderest love can appreciate the element of moral indignation even in such language as this. We have come to a time when we do not say, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth"; Christ has taught that we are to turn the other cheek to him who smites us; that we are to love our enemies and bless them that curse us.² Attention has been called to the fact that during the Sepoy atrocities, in connection with the Indian mutiny, the Book of Joshua was read in the churches with a great sense of its appropriateness.³ There is need to-day of the moral indignation against evil expressed in many of the psalms, and illustrated in the conduct of Joshua and the Israelites. There is an anger that is not sinful. Let us not be wiser than was God; let us be modest in passing judgment upon those who were brought into contact with the abominable cruelties and indescribable impurities which the Moabites committed in honor of Chemosh, and the Philistines in honor of Dagon. God had his purpose all through this bloody period. His people were struggling, not for themselves only, but for us most truly. They were fighting, not

¹ Psalm cxxxix, 22.

² Matthew v, 38-44.

³ Stanley, "Jewish Church," I, p. 281.

simply against the enemies of Israel, but against the enemies of humanity. They did God's work, and we to this hour are reaping good fruit from the seed of truth which they sowed, though often they sowed amid tears and blood.

Fuller attention must be called to the religion of the Canaanites, which was so terrible a snare to the Israelites at so many periods in their history. God intended his people to hold and to teach a spiritual religion. The Israelites from the earliest period of their history were under the tutelage of God, and were at the same time exposed to the dangerous influences of surrounding heathen nations. These nations found it difficult to rise above the modes of thought and the standards of morality of their time and environment. The religion of the Canaanites was the worship of misinterpreted natural phenomena, which, when so explained, ministered to the vilest moral impurity, and revealed itself in degrading rites and in cruel acts. Its gross conceptions dominated all Western Asia. The Israelites must have shrunk with loathing from the sensual passions of the Canaanites as contrasted with the nobler purity of the teachings of Moses. But those of weaker religious faith, we can readily understand, must have been carried away by the seductive influences of this sensuous and sensual religion. Baal was the chief god of the Canaanites; under different names he was worshiped. Now he was Moloch, now he was Chemosh; but he was always fierce, cruel, sensual, degraded, and degrading. The female deity was Astarte or Ashtoreth, the moon and the planet Venus. This goddess was worshiped with forms and rites degrading beyond description, and almost beyond conception. Some of the Israelites may have fallen into the neglect of all religion; but others occasionally adopted the faith and observed the rites of their idolatrous neighbors. There was a remnant, even in the most lapsed periods, still loyal to God; and even among those who had drifted into idolatry there was a latent religious life which responded to the call of God's servants for a spiritual faith and a purer life. Not until a much later period did idolatry secure a firm grip on the people of Israel as a whole. After the death of Joshua, frequently various social relations were formed with the people still in the land; and even many inter-marriages occurred. It thus came to pass that the conquered were often in turn conquerors, because of their social and business relations with their Hebrew neighbors.

Palestine at the time when the Israelites entered the country was governed by a number of petty but independent kings. A great change had taken place in the condition of the soil, in the methods of its cultivation, and, indeed, in the entire state of the country since the time when the nomad patriarchs had wandered over the land. The pastoral life had, to a considerable extent, given way to agricultural pursuits; the vine and olive were extensively cultivated. Strongly fortified cities arose on the heights and dotted the plains. The Canaanites proved themselves to be a warlike people. Those who were heads of tribes in the days of Jacob were local kings in the days of Joshua. These local sovereigns represented various tribes who were united in a common alarm by the sudden invasion of the Israelites, for they came not as marauding tribes seeking plunder, but as a whole people with the avowed intention of making a permanent home in the land, and of reducing the country to subjection. The more fertile hills of the land were soon cultivated in artificial terraces; while on others orchards of fruit trees were planted, and the still more rocky hills were covered with vineyards. Even to the present time the soil of Palestine is naturally rich; and, were it not for the disturbing wars and the abominable misgovernment of many ages, Palestine would still be fruitful. Were it possible even now to drive out the present occupants of the country, with their poor agricultural methods and their cruel systems of government, to introduce intelligent tillers of the soil, and to establish reputable forms of government, Palestine would again blossom as the rose. The land in that early day bore within itself all that was necessary for the subsistence and comfort of those primitive peoples. The climate was healthful and the seasons regular. The autumnal rains began about the last of October and prepared the ground for the seed; and the spring

rains prevailed during March and the beginning of April, causing the seed to spring up with great rapidity. Soon after the cessation of the rains, the grain rapidly ripened, and might be gathered in about the end of May. The first grapes ripened in July, but the vintage was not over till September. Although the summer months were dry and hot, the nights, as in so many tropical countries, were cool, and the dew fell copiously. Grains of all kinds grew abundantly, and might be gathered in about the end of May, yielding some thirty, some sixty, and some one hundredfold. Besides the vine, the olive, the almond, the date, and many sorts of figs, the orange, the pomegranate, and other fruit trees grew luxuriantly even in that early day.

The men who conquered Canaan were endowed with the noblest attributes of heroes, measured by the standards of their time. Every reader of Anglo-Saxon history is stirred by the story of its heroes in battle and its peaceful founders of enduring states. No American can read the early history of the American Republic without earnest appreciation of the "brave men and fair women" who crossed the stormy sea, who landed on the historic rock, and who struggled against savage foes, a barren soil, and a wintry climate to lay the enduring foundation of the American Republic. These Puritan and Pilgrim fathers were men of lofty motive, of high endeavor, of un murmuring patience, and of heroic achievements. Doubtless, at times, they were stern as they were brave, severe as they were sincere; but they always meant to be loyal to God and helpful to man.

Men of this character were required to conquer the territory that lay west of the Jordan, and to establish a pure and theocratic people. Their wilderness experience was not without its helpful influence on mind and heart. It transformed them from a company of tribes into a solid and heroic nation. Its hardships were the messengers of God for the development of a great, brave, and wise people. Still, it is true that many of them lacked these noble qualities; true that some of them were not far removed from the barbarous spirit and practices of their heathen neighbors; true that they were disposed once to return to Egypt, and many times to lapse into idolatry. But the elements of a great nation were present, and God was developing those elements into the symmetrical character of a people called by him and consecrated to the ennoblement of the entire race. They did not literally obey the command of God to drive out the enemy from the chosen territory; for it was really two and a half centuries later before the accomplishment of the divine purpose was secured. The mountainous districts practically yielded to the power of the invaders; there the Canaanites were slaughtered or made tributary; but the Israelites were unable to take some cities, and unable to meet the war chariots of the Canaanites on the plains. God was, however, developing the nobler qualities of his people, while he was restraining or eliminating their evil and idolatrous tendencies. This body of nomads became tolerably successful in gaining a home by conquest. They secured possession of many rich pastures and fertile corn lands; and marvelous things, in the providence of God, were eventually achieved by these invaders. The world of that day never saw a diviner man than was Moses; a more heroic and knightly leader than Joshua, and a more honest, blameless, and capable man as philosopher, statesman, prophet, and judge, than Samuel.

After the great victory which Joshua and his brave followers accomplished at Beth-horon, new work pressed upon his attention. He was now a man of about ninety, but capable to an unusual degree as a soldier on the field, or as a leader in council. Israel had achieved great things; great, goodly, and strong cities, which she had not built, were hers. Vineyards and olive trees which she had not planted, and houses full of all good things, she possessed. Consequently, the great work now awaiting Joshua was the division of this chosen land among the tribes of Israel. Part of the country was, indeed, still held by the Canaanites, but its complete conquest was assumed, and for purposes of distribution the whole land was considered as in the possession of Israel. But a little more than six years had passed since the crossing of

the Jordan, and during that time great victories had been achieved. Joshua was still strong and heroic as when Moses had chosen him to be his successor. Great and pressing duties required the exercise of all the wisdom and influence which he had acquired during these years of public service. The division of the land among the tribes of Israel will not suffer in respect to equity and fruitful results, when compared with the wisest divisions of conquered territory in modern times. A great assembly of the people was held at Gilgal; Joshua, Eleazar, and the elders presiding over the people. We have already seen that two and a half of the tribes — Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh — had secured their tribal allotments on the east of the Jordan. Still nine and one-half tribes awaited their share. The tribe of Joseph was now divided into the two sections of Ephraim and Manasseh; and this tribe, because of its heroic history, and because of Joshua's connection with it, claimed precedence. They demanded the best part of the country, the central portion, in which water abounded and whose soil was specially fruitful. They seemed to have acted promptly and to have secured their desire. Ephraim took possession of the country north and south of Shechem, with its beautiful valleys and gracefully rounded hills. In Shechem the bones of Joseph were buried, and there Abraham and Jacob had long dwelt. Naturally, therefore, because of its historic associations and central advantages, it became, in some sense, the capital of the land. In extent and importance no tribe surpassed it but Judah. Immediately north of this district the half tribe of Manasseh, which joined its fortunes with Ephraim, found a home; it extended north of Ephraim to the plain of Esdraelon and Mount Carmel.

Although they were embarrassed by the presence of the Canaanitish fortresses in the plain of Esdraelon, Joshua did not sympathize with their desire to secure the help of other tribes in driving out the Canaanites. He promised that the hill country and the forests should be theirs, and assured them that eventually they should drive out the Canaanites, though the latter were so strong with their horses and chariots. "The house of Joseph" was, therefore, obliged to content itself with its present possessions, and with these promises of future aggrandizement. The possessions of Dan consisted of certain cities within the original territory of Judea. On the seacoast it extended some distance above Joppa, and included a portion of the plain of Sharon. It included the cities of Lydda, Ekron, Beth-Dagon, and Joppa. Finally it was forced back into the hills and had not sufficient space for its 64,000 fighting men. Dan had no patron tribe as had Simeon and Benjamin; it had, therefore, to lead a sort of camp life. Its location was known even in later times as the "Camp of Dan"; this was near Kirjath-jearim, and a few miles west of Jerusalem. We shall see later that they conquered some Canaanites near Mount Hermon and changed the name of the town from Laish to Dan. Naphtali's possession ran up into the delightful valleys of the Anti-Libanus; it bends upward from the south of the Sea of Galilee to meet Asher. A long narrow strip of land on the seacoast was assigned to Asher, reaching from Carmel northward. The territory of Zebulun was north of Issachar, west of the Jordan and a part of the Sea of Galilee. The tribe stretched across the land with one extremity on the Sea of Galilee, and the other reaching to some part of the Bay of Accho. Issachar, one-half of Manasseh, and Ephraim occupied the territory extending from the Jordan to the Mediterranean. Issachar had, in some respects, the finest part of the country; its home was in the rich plains of Esdraelon. It included the Mounts of Hermon and Gilboa. There was no more fertile or beautiful portion in Palestine. Ephraim's territory, as we have seen, was fertile, though uneven in some parts and in others mountainous. It extended from the Jordan to the Mediterranean. Samaria and the valley of Sharon were included in Ephraim. On its northern extremity rose Ebal and Gerizim, and in the south was Mount Ephraim, some of whose passes are associated with important events in the military history of Israel. Ephraim for four centuries was a dominant tribe; within its boundaries was the religious capital, Shiloh, and the political capital, Shechem. It was thus long the center of Jewish life; and after the

death of Solomon it regained its former position, as such a center. Benjamin, the client of Ephraim, received the territory which included the fertile plains and rich groves of Jericho, and spread over part of the valley of the Jordan, and the head of the Dead Sea, and extended westward as far as Jebus, afterward Jerusalem, but then a fortress in the possession of the enemy. The rest of the south, to the borders of Edom, became the opulent domain of the great tribe of Judah, with the exception of a district on the southwest about Gaza, which was assigned to Simeon. Simeon's possession consisted of certain cities rather than of a continuous territory. We have already seen that the best pastures were in the romantic regions on the east of the Jordan, but the most productive lands for grain were the central plains, while the best lands for the grape and the olive were the hills of Judah and Benjamin.

Distinguished men like Joshua and Caleb received special grants of estates; perhaps the heads of the tribes enjoyed somewhat similar privileges, but the whole land came under general laws of property. Houses and walled cities might be sold in perpetuity, if unredeemed, within the year; but the law of the inalienability of estates was observed, so that land could be sold only for a limited period. At the time of the Jubilee, all estates reverted, without repurchase, to their original owners. The venerable Caleb, a survivor of the spies of forty-five years before, made a special claim to Hebron, on the ground of a grant made to him by Moses when he had explored the territory, and also as a gift from Joshua. Doubtless Joshua, with genuine delight, recognized this claim and cheerfully granted this land to his old and honored comrade. Caleb showed a superb spirit in the manner in which he claimed this territory. His heroic courage and exalted faith stir our blood as we read his brave words, remembering that he was so advanced in years. Joshua, with the self-abnegation always characteristic of his desires and endeavors, took no inheritance for himself; but the nation honored itself by joyfully assigning to him as his possession Timnath-serah, in Mount Ephraim. Six cities of refuge were appointed in appropriate locations. There were three on each side of the Jordan at a convenient distance from each other. One who had accidentally caused the death of another might fly to one of these cities, as an asylum from the avenger of blood, until his case could be properly considered. On the west side of the Jordan the three cities were Hebron, Shechem, and Kadesh of Naphtali; on the east the three were Golan, Ramoth-Gilead, and Bezer. The tribes were complete without reckoning Levi. This tribe was separated to the office of religion; it therefore had no specific territory, but constituted the priesthood and was to receive its support from the community at large. Nothing could be more beautiful than the spirit manifested by Joshua during all these important transactions. He was as wise in his methods as he was unselfish in his motives; he was as skillful a ruler in peace as he was a successful general in war.

The account of this division of the territory among the tribes forms the second part of the Book of Joshua,¹ the "Domesday Book" of Palestine, as it has been called. The laws that were established for the government of the people were eminently wise and patriotic. God was recognized as the "Lord of the Soil," and every fifty years he resumed possession of the territory and then returned it to the descendants of the original owners. It has been supposed that the suggestion of this plan was of Egyptian origin. The king of Egypt, during the administration of Joseph, was recognized as the proprietor of the land, and leased it out on a rent which is supposed to correspond to the tithes paid by the Israelites. The people were thus, in a sense, an independent body, cultivating their hereditary farms, whose boundaries always remained the same. A neighbor's landmark was not to be removed, and the attempt to remove it in later days was denounced by prophets with great severity. The law against usury was enforced. Loans, however, might be made as a charitable accommodation, and the only taxes were the two tenths, or tithes, and other religious offerings. The first tenth was given to

¹ Joshua xiii-xxiii.

the tribe of Levi for maintaining a learned nobility, and in remuneration for their surrender of a twelfth of the land; the second tenth was the tithe of the poor. The only public revenue of this theocratic commonwealth was that of the sacred treasury, and corresponding to this the only public expenditures were for religious worship. The commerce of the country was confined to the inland caravan trade. The people seem to have been blind at this period to the maritime advantages of their location. Their ports remained for a considerable time in possession of their enemies, and were the last places conquered. The manufactures of the people supplied their limited wants; they brought from Egypt the arts of weaving woolen, linen, and probably cotton stuffs, and also the art of dyeing and bleaching, of making vessels, of working in iron and precious metals, and of doing many kinds of ornamental work which were used mostly in connection with the altars and sacred vessels of their religious worship. It thus came to pass that the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob found a home in the land of promise; under his own vine and fig tree dwelt each man with his family. Until after the death of Joshua there was no serious disturbance of the harmony of the nation. The misunderstanding between the tribes on this and that side of the Jordan was peacefully adjusted. The tribes beyond the river, although they had raised a public altar to God, disclaimed all intention of doing violence to the honor of a single national place of worship. They raised their altar not to offer rival sacrifices, but with the laudable purpose of affirming to later posterity that their tribes, also, were a part of the national confederacy.

CHAPTER VI.

JOSHUA AND JUDGES CONTRASTED.

WITH the conquest of Canaan the tribes entered on another era in their eventful history. They now found themselves a settled nation in the divinely appointed land. They were no more a wandering tribe, but a civilized and agricultural people. A feeling of repose and gratitude filled their hearts. The festivals of the harvest and the vintage were commemorations of this sense of comfort and possession. The country, as we have seen, had previously been inhabited by a remarkable people; and the history of the Israelites down to the Captivity was to give evidence of their proximity to the Canaanite peoples, with their peculiar social customs and heathen rites. It has been well remarked that their occupancy of the chosen land bears a somewhat similar relation to the entrance of the Christian Church into territories of the Roman empire, once possessed by pagan peoples. They, as a holy people, were occupying that territory as a holy land. Their land was peculiarly secluded by sea, by desert, and by river from the surrounding world. They were a people who were to dwell alone among the nations of the earth, and yet their land was so central, lying between Assyria and Egypt, that it already possessed present influence and the prophecy of subsequent enlargement. Like Greece, it was small and compact, and yet large enough to develop a legitimate rivalry among its own various tribes. It possessed a sufficient diversity of productions to stimulate the ambition of an agricultural people. It was peculiarly fitted by its conformation and its geographical position to give birth to a Bible for all nations, to be the home of him who was the Desire, and is to be the King, of all peoples, and to be the cradle of that Church which eventually is to fill the whole earth.

Remnants of the Canaanite people still remained in the land. One glance at this people, as we pass, will be instructive. Usually the remnants of a partially conquered people take

refuge among the mountains. This was true of the Gothic people in Spain after the invasion of the Moors; this has been true repeatedly of the brave Highlanders in Scotland. But in Palestine the old inhabitants took refuge not in the mountains but in the plains. Their iron chariots and war horses enabled them to possess the plains, while the invaders were often driven to the mountains. Generally speaking, the Israelites possessed the hill country, and the Canaanites the plains. With only their infantry, the Israelites were no match for the cavalry and chariots of the Canaanites in the plains. Indeed, during the greater part of their sojourn in Palestine, they were not masters of their own plains, but were at one time at the mercy of the Canaanites, and at another of the Syrians. The battle of Merom forms an exception to the general rule in that Israel's victory was on the level ground against the cavalry of Jabin.¹ The old inhabitants also retained, for the most part, possession of their strong fortresses. Their cities were great and fenced up to heaven.² At the first onset the invaders, carried away by fiery enthusiasm, overcame some of these fortresses, but later the older inhabitants maintained their ground and held their walled cities. The Avites, and other aboriginal peoples, also remained in the land. Along the seacoast were the Phœnician cities. The Canaanites long remained in Gezer under tribute; possibly they became again independent. But they were finally dispossessed by the king of Egypt, who gave the place to his daughter, the wife of Solomon. Beth-shean, which was called the "Jebus of the North," remained a heathen city under the name of Seythopolis to the time of the Christian era. It was situated on the route from Jerusalem to Damascus. On the northern frontier, and in other parts of the land, there were races ruled by independent kings, which retained their independence until the time of David; and there were also friendly and tributary tribes, such as the Kenites who were related by blood; they had already settled in the far south on the edge of the desert. Saul spared them³ when sent by Samuel to destroy the Amalekites among whom they dwelt. There were other tributary tribes who seemed to have maintained that relationship until the time of Solomon.

Judah had to struggle along for quiet possession of the territory it had chosen. At the conquest it boasted more fighting men than Ephraim; it also had a higher military reputation. Judah held the land on all sides of Jerusalem except the north. Soon, her territory being too small, she engaged in numerous wars in which Simeon gave valuable help. In these tribal campaigns Bezek was conquered.⁴ Hebron next fell before the power of the invaders.⁵ The Canaanites had secured possession of it after its conquest by Joshua. But Caleb had claimed it and was determined to conquer it. Forty-five years before he had passed through it on his dangerous journey as a spy. Then he was full of manly strength; but now, though he was old, he was determined to lead the attacking forces. The finest grapes in Palestine grew on the slopes of its valleys; and as the site of the Cave of Machpelah, where lay the bodies of the heroic founders of the race, it was dear to the hearts of the Israelites. Descendants of the once-dreaded Anakim were its masters. But heroic determination inspired the hearts of Caleb and his men, and soon they were masters of the historic town. Henceforth, it was the capital of the southern tribes, amid the varied experiences of the nation, until David captured Jebus and made that town immortal as the Jerusalem of song and story. As we shall see later, Debir had formerly been called "Kirjath-sepher," the "book town." It was located about three miles west of Hebron. Its location and history invited conquest and enkindled enthusiasm. Caleb offered the hand of his daughter as a prize to the brave leader who should take Debir. Othniel, whose name meant "Lion of God," and a younger brother, or perhaps a nephew, of Caleb, became master of Debir and claimed Achsah as his bride. She, however, desired a south land in which springs of water abounded, and her request was granted. In this way the Kenizzites came to possess the higher and the lower springs. Zephath was now destroyed, and its site

¹ Joshua xi.² Deuteronomy ix, 1.³ I. Samuel xv, 6.⁴ Judges i, 4.⁵ Judges i, 10-20.



DAVID ROBERTS.

ASCENT OF THE LOWER RANGE OF SINAI.

received the name of Hormah, "the banned" or destruction. Judah also took Gaza, Askelon, and Ekron, cities of Philistia, together with the land in which these cities lay; but again the chariots of the Canaanites were victorious and possession of these cities had to be given up and Judah retired again to the hills. Many of the foreign clans ranged themselves under the flag of Judah, and this tribe became very powerful.

The first national Sanctuary in Palestine would naturally have been established at Bethel; but at the early stage of the conquest it was still in the hands of the Canaanites. The Ark, therefore, found its seat at Shiloh, where it remained through the period of the Judges until it was carried to the fatal battlefield. At the first, the Ark was at Gilgal, but as the conquerors entered farther into the country, a more central situation became necessary. Shiloh was probably chosen, not because of the strength, beauty, or ancient associations of the place, but rather because of its comparative seclusion. Shiloh is supposed to have been nineteen miles north of Jerusalem, and eleven south of Shechem. During the period named it was the center of the worship of Jehovah. The name Shiloh was given probably because of the "rest" which now came to the weary conquerors in this quiet valley. Nevertheless, Shiloh was intended only as the temporary resting place of the Ark. The conquerors early fixed upon Shechem as the capital. This was the ancient city near which Jacob had first encamped, when he returned from Padan-aram;¹ it was then a city of the Hivites. It was now the center of the great and haughty tribe of Ephraim to which Joshua himself belonged. Under an oak near Shechem, Jacob buried the amulets and teraphim of his household. His sons returned with their flocks to this fertile region. After the conquest, as we have seen, Joseph's bones were buried in his inheritance near Shechem. Alike because of its central position and sacred associations, it became a gathering-place of the tribes. Here were the two sacred mountains, Ebal and Gerizim, about which gathered the associations of the curses and blessings of the law. Here Joshua won the tribes to a solemn engagement to serve Jehovah. Gerizim was the oldest Sanctuary in Palestine, reaching to the days of Abraham and Melchizedek; on its summit, according to Dean Stanley,² are still pointed out, in Samaritan traditions, the twelve stones which Joshua laid in order. In their traditions he is enshrined alone of the Jewish heroes, after the time of Moses. He is "King Joshua," and he takes up his abode on the "blessed mountain," as Gerizim is always called. At Shechem, Joshua, as we shall soon see, appears as the representative of his tribe, checking its pride and warning it of approaching danger.

It is evident that now dark shadows were beginning to fall on the heart of Joshua. He saw the dangers to which the people were exposed because of the influences exerted upon them by their heathen neighbors. It is touching in the extreme to study the history of Joshua at this critical and pathetic period of his life. From their isolated strongholds in the land, the Canaanites were still able to hold the Israelites in check, and by the influence of their idolatry to weaken their faith. A reaction soon began, and the Canaanites were speedily recovering themselves so that they drove the Israelites from the lowlands to the difficult mountainous heights. Joshua was now stricken in years. He had lived quietly for some time at Timnath-serah in Mount Ephraim. He knew that the end was approaching. He, therefore, ordered all Israel to assemble at Shechem.³ This spot, as we have seen, was sacred in the history of the nation. Here Abraham erected his first altar in Canaan. Here was the first national burial place, although the sepulchers of some patriarchs were at Hebron. Joshua summoned the people to renew the covenant which had been made with Jehovah at Mounts Ebal and Gerizim. He delivered two solemn addresses, reminding the people of God's wonderful fulfillment of the promises he had made to their fathers. He then caused them to renew their covenant with God. Joshua was not a great poet like Moses; and he uttered no words of farewell in poetic strains as did his mighty predecessor. The prophetic spirit, however, rested upon him, and in

¹ Genesis xxxiii, 18.

² Stanley, "Jewish Church," I, pp. 310, 311.

³ Joshua xxiv, 1.

his last exhortation he charged the people to serve Jehovah, and warned them against the evils, of whose coming he had sad forebodings. Here in Shechem, among his last acts, he set up¹ a pillar of stone, in harmony with the customs of the time, to remind the people of the solemnity of their vow to their God, and the God of their fathers. Then the brave soldier and knightly leader passed away. He, as truly as Moses, is called the "servant of the Lord."² He died at the age of 110 years, and in his own city of Timnath-serah he was buried. Dean Stanley calls attention to the fact that on the summit of the Giant's Hill, overlooking the Bosphorus and the Black Sea, the vast tomb of Joshua is shown by the Mohammedans. But the Jewish people cherished the remembrance of his sepulcher with fuller knowledge. In the same grave in Timnath-serah, according to an ancient tradition, were buried the stone knives used in the circumcision at Gilgal. These were long sought as relics by those who visited the tomb of Joshua. Thus he died twenty-five or twenty-six years after crossing the Jordan, full of years and full of honor, and in his death the light of Israel for a time went out.

Dr. Geikie³ reminds us that the investigations of our own day have linked the present and the remote past by the discovery of what seems almost beyond question to be the tomb of Joshua. M. Victor Guérin has the credit of this remarkable discovery. And the same writer further affirms that in 1870 additional confirmation, that this was really the tomb of Joshua, was obtained from the discovery made in it by Abbé Richard. It is said in our Greek Bible that the Israelites when they interred Joshua buried with him the flint knives used at Gilgal. While examining the tomb with that thought in mind, and in company with a priest from Jerusalem, and the sheik of the village El-Birzeit, the Abbé actually found in it a great number of flint knives which had been hidden in the soil of the different chambers of the sepulcher. Some doubt has been thrown, however, upon this identification, and the value of these discoveries.

Thus died the successor of Moses. He was a superb example of a warrior, blameless, fearless, and devout. He was such a man as would kindle the imagination of poets who delight to describe the brave, tender, and pious knights of the middle ages. In him manly strength was beautifully combined with womanly tenderness. He led conquering armies and inflicted terrible judgments, because he believed himself to be an obedient instrument in the hand of God. He is certainly one of the grandest characters on the page of history, ancient or modern, sacred or profane. He appointed no successor. He left the people in the land of milk and honey, with many of the blessings of freedom and with marvelous opportunities for growth and progress, should they remain obedient to God. But their disobedience in not rooting out their ancient and implacable foes led to continual warfare, destroying their peace and freedom, and, before long, to a humiliating and degrading captivity.

We now breathe a new historic atmosphere. We are still in the time of the theocracy, and yet we enter a different realm as we pass from the rule of Joshua to that of the Judges. We have gone from an age of comparative law and of acknowledged authority into a period of reckless rule and of lawless outbreaks. It is the heroic age of Hebrew history. It abounds in wild adventures, and feats of wonderful valor. We have followed the nation of slaves until we have seen them become a people in the land promised to their fathers. All Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, and for varied forms of instruction; but the period before us is disappointing as regards the moral and religious condition of Israel. It is, however, rich in varied interest, in romantic incidents, in rough heroism, and in the union of ancient manners with national evidences of true faith and religious devotion. It is also a period marked by tragical pathos and heroic deeds, as is no other period of Jewish history. Personal activity and individual daring, with corresponding craft, were necessary qualifications for office on the part of those leaders known as Judges. We pass at once into a realm where barbaric savagery

¹ Joshua xxiv, 26.² Joshua xxiv, 29.³ See "Hours with the Bible," II, pp. 433-435.

is common, and where the gentler virtues are rare. We are conscious of a great change from the calm majesty of Moses and Joshua to the reckless daring and turbulent authority of Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson. These men are great in a sort of barbaric chivalry as rulers, rather than as calm and dignified administrators of justice, as were Joshua and Moses. We have come into an atmosphere that is distinctly more human than divine. In some portions of the Hebrew writings the divine element so predominates that we almost forget that the actors and writers were men of like passions with ourselves; but in studying the period of the Judges we almost wonder that men of such earthly impulses and unholy passions could have been used by God as his instruments in carrying out high and holy designs. These leaders were often both barbarous and brutal. This book recalls us from the high ideals of a chosen people to the delinquencies, irregularities, and rugged wickedness of men and women who were of the earth and earthy. It is a part of the glory of divine revelation that it does not create or magnify the virtues of its heroes, and does not deny or minimize their vices. No part of the Bible gives so great pain as the Book of Judges. Idolatry, impurity, and cruelty abound; but the Bible nowhere sanctions any act of cruelty, treachery, or impurity. It merely states the facts, without comment, and leaves future generations to pass their own judgments. All admit that the moral tone of the time was bad, that the light was dim, that the standard was low. And yet men did not live up to this dim light, nor this low standard. The heroes of that day are not models for our day. They were ruthless chieftains, stern swordsmen, and rough rulers. Their very imperfections give the greater glory to the divine grace which could use them. One finds it difficult in reading this book to understand how such barbarous men could become the deliverers of the children of God. Over against the Book of Judges, as we shall see later, is the Book of Ruth. The one is all wildness and roughness, the other all sweetness, tenderness, and beauty. We must not lay such undue emphasis, however, on the human element in this book as to neglect the divine purpose which underlies the history, and which controlled the events. In studying the book, as in studying the life of him who was, in the largest measure, the Word of God, we are to lay just emphasis alike on the divine and the human elements. God, if we may so say, did the best he could with the material in his hand. Often his laws were shaped to the exigencies of men's hearts. God takes men where he finds them, and deals with them on the plane whereon they stand. His purpose is to lift them to higher levels, and to make them noble. Even the best men are but men at best. God's chosen people as a whole were occasionally in rebellion against him; and even those who were chosen from the chosen people, as God's agents and the leaders of their race, were wayward and rebellious at times to a startling degree. There is a wild freshness about this period which is full of danger, and at the same time full of promise; it suggests freedom from restraint, and also inspires the hope that under proper guidance it may become an element of vast blessing to the race whom God is training for his service. In this period we move amid mountain and woodland scenery; we are thrilled by incidents of romance, and are inspired by evidences of chivalry. It has both its dark and its bright side. It is a time when liberty degenerates into license, and when freedom becomes violence and anarchy. In the atmosphere of this time, what is human too often becomes barbarous, savage, and even bestial. We have here no story of pastoral purity, of idyllic simplicity, or of personal righteousness; we have here no epic of knightly valor associated with personal purity, and no saintly bravery without its unsaintly and painfully human elements. Side by side, we find the pathos of tragedy and the fascination of romance.¹

Attention has been frequently called to the vein of humor, and even of drollery, which marks portions of this period. The men of Dan appear before us with a twinkle in their eyes, and a smile on their lips as they ask their conundrums. Samson is a rollicking, joking, dashing giant and hero. He makes a joke when in the last terrible scene of his life; for he

¹ Introduction to Joshua in "Pulpit Commentary."

then prays to be avenged "for one of my two eyes." No fewer than four times does the historian remind us that "in those days there was no king in Israel," but "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." The result of this state of lawlessness was, as we are told frequently, that "the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord." We are then told, again and again, that "the children of Israel cried unto the Lord." Here we have cause and effect; we have sin producing punishment, and punishment resulting in penitence, and penitence expressing itself in prayer, and prayer, earnestly offered, securing deliverance. We have in turn blessings leading to presumption, and presumption advancing to apostasy. There is thus here a regular cycle of cause and effect. We are in a period of transition. The restraining influences exercised by Moses and Joshua have ceased; and the authority later to be exercised by kings has not yet begun. The danger from hostile tribes has, in part, passed away, and the disintegrating tendency of peace without any controlling national bond, or religious principle, is fully manifested. There is danger, also, lest the conquered population shall make common cause against the invaders. These populations have never been fully expelled nor entirely subdued. They were to the Hebrews in the land what the Britons were to the invading Saxons, and what the Saxons later were to the Danes and to the Normans. These partially conquered tribes were biding their time and would some day mass their forces and perhaps conquer their conquerors. Nations outside of Palestine were also hostile to the Hebrews. There was danger that much of the work done by Joshua would be undone by these combined influences. Within were apostasy and division; without were seduction and hostility. At times there was danger lest the Israelites should be driven out of the Promised Land.

But the change from a wandering to a settled life had been made; the children of God had become the repository of a new religion given amid cloud and flame on Mount Sinai. They had secured a foothold in the Promised Land. They had acquired familiarity with their new life, and they must cease to be herdsmen and become agriculturists. In this advance from a nomadic to a settled life, there necessarily was retrogression as well as progression. Human progress is not a steadily flowing river, but rather a tide that ebbs and flows; but on the whole there is progress in the right direction. The Hebrews had received a partial training, even while in the Wilderness, for their settled life in Palestine. Their long halts gave them opportunity to cultivate fields, to sow seed, and to reap harvests. They were then in process of training for their great career. They had become already, to a large degree, an agricultural people. Nothing but the persecutions to which they have been so cruelly subjected, with a corresponding insecurity of property, have transformed the Jews of to-day into a mercantile rather than an agricultural race. The Hebrews in Palestine were ceasing to be a hermit nation, and were taking their place among the nations of the world.

They were also to enter into certain commercial relations with the other nations who inhabited the seaboard of Palestine; these were especially the Phœnicians and Philistines. Tyre and Sidon were already strong and prosperous towns; and these and other towns were only too glad of the opportunity to do business with the Israelites. The Philistines were most hostile in their spirit, and less willing to enter into commercial relations. The Philistines had, themselves, at a very early day, been immigrants like the Israelites. They were probably descendants of Ham's son Mizraim; and probably migrated into Canaan from Caphtor, which is variously understood to be Crete, Cyprus, or Egypt. Without doubt they were the Caphtorim who supplanted the Avim and other early settlers. The Philistines who formed treaties with Abraham and Isaac were a pastoral people, but with a king and warlike organizations. They were still, in the time of Judges, a warlike rather than a commercial people; and they still possessed a vigorous military organization. The five confederate cities of Philistia, Gaza, Askelon, Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron, were sufficiently strong to dispossess Dan, to conquer Judah, and to make their power felt by other tribes as well.

This condition of hostility, and the change from a nomadic to a settled life were among the forces which were controlling the children of Israel at this time. Unfortunately, they showed at times great rivalry among themselves. Deborah complains of the apathy of Reuben, Dan, and Asher during the oppression experienced by Zebulun and Naphtali. Judah and Ephraim are always more or less hostile. Judah is seldom mentioned, and the silence is suggestive of indifference to the welfare of the tribes as a whole, and of a selfish regard for its own interests. Only one, probably, of the many Judges belonged to the tribe of Judah—Othniel, the Kenizzite, who was the first of the Judges. As a southern tribe, Judah had less need of these remarkable and providential deliverers. Although Judah did not entirely escape the oppression of the Amorites and of the Philistines, still they were not so continually under the heel of oppression as were some of the other tribes. The fuller glory of Judah came in connection with the brilliant career of David. Ephraim lost no opportunity of asserting her superiority; and the seed was already sown which brought forth fruit in the subsequent division of the kingdom. The tribes east of the Jordan were not only separated from their brethren on the west, but were not even fully united among themselves. Reuben's isolation was far from honorable, and the tribe finally sank into permanent obscurity. This tribe gave the people no judge, no hero, no prophet; and Deborah, with scorn, rebukes Reuben for indifference or cowardice. Gad and Manasseh had a more honorable record. We have not, therefore, a very hopeful picture of the tribes at this period. On the west bank we have Judah and Simeon in comparative isolation, but, because of purity and discipline, the strongest of the groups. But the remainder of the tribes we see disunited, and submitting with more or less grace to the superiority claimed by Ephraim. On the east bank Gad and half Manasseh are on fairly good terms with each other and with the western tribes, but separated by the Jordan from intimate fellowship; while Reuben, as we have seen, remains in ignoble seclusion. Fortunately for Israel their foes were also divided among themselves. The league hastily formed against Joshua came to naught, as we have already seen. A similar fate awaited subsequent leagues formed against the Hebrews. The accounts of their attacks and their defeats in detail will come before us later.

We have thus seen that the period of the Judges was one of liberty, degenerating into license. We have seen that the people were rapidly passing from a pastoral to an agricultural state. We have seen that, both inside and outside of Palestine, the Israelites were coming into closer contact with their heathen neighbors. These neighbors, while superior in culture, were vastly inferior in morality. We have seen that the tribes were falling apart into selfish groups, or equally selfish isolations, when the pressure of a common danger was removed; and we have also seen that there was a strong tendency to apostasy from God, and to the adoption of the abominations of prevalent idolatries.

The tendency toward idolatry was the saddest of all the drifts observed at this time. This tendency was held sharply in check while Israel wandered in the Wilderness; there, as has been well said, they lived in a religious hothouse. They did not breathe the common atmosphere, but dwelt in a world of their own. Their religious faith was the result of spiritually favorable conditions. But without trial there can be no real virtue; mere innocence is not robust virtue. When the test came they were not equal to its severity; and when temptation surrounded them they threw aside former restraints and too often yielded to the fascinations of idolatry. Those who lived at a distance from the tabernacle at Shiloh might go up to it once a year for the most attractive of the feasts, that of the Tabernacles; but absent from the tabernacle, the duties of religion were largely forgotten. The law was not read, religious ceremonies were not observed, and many grew up ignorant of the past glorious history, of the present important duty, and of the sublime future possibilities of the race. Superstitious observances soon crept into the worship of Jehovah. Images were introduced; God's name and worship

were profaned; and Jehovah only became one of many gods, and in some instances his worship was entirely abandoned and that of Baal and Ashtoreth substituted.¹

Israel thus experienced great dangers in mingling with the surrounding populations. Had Israel been true to God, the dark scenes in her history, at this time, would never have been enacted, and the record would be bright and beautiful. Israel was now planting the seed which was to bring forth in distant centuries her two captivities, with their painful experiences and enduring results. It is easy to trace the causes which led to these captivities, in the intercourse at this time with the Canaanites.

Some writers have compared this period to the heroic age in Greece; and there are points of analogy between the two periods. There was in both cases an invasion of new territory, and in both, also, the bravery of heroes in resisting invaders and of invaders in seeking possession of desirable dominion. There was in both the painful mingling of virtue and vice, of heroic self-sacrifice with savagery and sin; but in the case of the children of Israel there was a strain of heavenly music even amid the wildest and most sinful revelries. There was some consciousness of a divine mission even in the commission of sinful acts, and there was some reliance on God, even while there was a recklessness in evil. The conscience of Israel was at times active; and such a conscience the pagan heroes did not and could not possess. An analogy has also been found between this period and the age of Christian chivalry in connection with the Crusades. This analogy is much more accurate; for over parts of this same territory in its later age went the crusaders to rescue the tomb of Christ from the hand of the infidel. These crusaders illustrated many of the qualities both of nobility and of baseness, found in the earlier period. They were at times brave and noble; at other times mean, selfish, abominable, and brutally cruel. There was thus a startling mixture of good and evil in both movements; often the evil triumphed, and the good was overthrown. But, even in their ignoble motives, there were times of high and noble purposes; and in both cases the invaders contributed directly or indirectly to the progress of the race.

The writer of the Book of Judges is unknown. Some have ascribed it to Samuel; it may have been written by him or some other prophet who lived early in the reign of King Saul. The frequent expression "in those days there was no king in Israel," seems to imply that the book was written after the kingdom was established. It seems clear, also, that it was written before the kingdom fell to David, because we are told in the first chapter that "the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem, unto this day"; but we know that one of the first acts of David was to expel the Jebusites from Jerusalem. The book traces the steps by which the people departed from God. It shows at the same time God's patience with their wanderings, while he mingled long-suffering with timely chastisement. On four occasions the Angel-Jehovah, the Jesus of the Old Testament, appeared for the deliverance of the people.² The chronology of the period is involved in obscurity. Clear marks of time are wanting; different writers vary in their estimate as to the number of years covered by the book. It is thus extremely difficult to arrive at the exact facts. Sometimes the narratives of the Judges run parallel to one another, and no great reliance can be placed upon the recurring numbers of twenty, forty, and eighty. The aggregate of the years of alternate oppressions and deliverance gives no satisfactory result. There are no quotations in the New Testament from the Book of Judges; but in Acts xiii, 20, and Hebrews xi, 32, there are references to the history narrated in the book; and in the Psalms and in the Prophets there are frequent references to the book.

The deliverers, who were called Judges, are an interesting class of men. They were a very different class of men from the ordinary administrators of justice among the Hebrews. They were specially raised up by God to deliver his people from powerful foes. Their rank was not hereditary, and the selection of Judges was not limited to any one tribe. They were the unique

¹ See Introduction in "Pulpit Commentary," p. 14.

² Judges ii, 1, v, 23, vi, 11, xiii, 3.

rulers of Israel during the theocracy from Joshua to Saul. The name by which they are called, "Shophetim," is derived from a word signifying "to judge." This word bears a close resemblance to that which designates the governors or Suffetes of the Carthaginians, a colony of the Tyrians, who carried the name from Phœnicia. Their rulers, in the time of the Punic War, Livy, the Roman historian, named Suffetes. The Hebrew Shophetim were military dictators rather than regularly constituted magistrates. Their authority was extraordinary and exceptional, growing out of the emergencies of their time, reminding us of that of the Roman dictators, as it was often military rather than judicial. Eli and Samuel were exceptions, they being only civil rulers. The Judges have been not inaptly compared to Arab Sheiks, or Indian Sachems. They were not kings, for Jehovah was King; neither were they heads of tribes. In some features of their work they remind us of the chieftains of the Scotch Highlanders and of the heads of clans in the very early days of Russian history. They wore no badges of office, had no salaries, and their rule was not hereditary. They were to be reformers in peace and leaders of armies in war. We have already seen that the Hebrew people were semi-barbarians, and in this lawless and anarchistic period, they needed rulers of exceptional character and authority. These Judges exercised their authority within the limits of their own tribes. The case of Deborah may be an exception, as we are told that she sat under her palm tree and judged the tribes of Israel.¹ But even in her gallant enterprise to break the organized confederacy of the Canaanites, some of the tribes took no part and did not apparently recognize her authority. The Judges were of different tribes and came forward as the necessities of the hour demanded. The dignity of the Judge was for life; but the succession was irregular. There were periods during which the people were without rulers; and long periods of foreign oppression occurred while the Hebrews groaned without deliverers. God sometimes, in marked ways, called men to the office of Judge; but the people usually chose, under providential guidance, the man most likely to lead them successfully against the common enemy. Fifteen Judges are named during a period some time after Joshua to the coronation of Saul. Othniel, the first of the number, was probably of the great tribe of Judah. He delivered the people from the tyranny of the king of Mesopotamia, and he ruled in peace for forty years. Shamgar's tribe is uncertain. Ehud was of the tribe of Benjamin. He delivered Israel from the Moabites, by slaying Eglon, their king, at Jericho, and then raising an army and defeating the foe in battle. Deborah and Barak were of the great northern tribe of Ephraim. Gideon was of Manasseh. Tola of Issachar; Jair and Jephthah of the transjordanic region. Elon was of Zebulun. Samson was of Dan, and his enemies were the Philistines on the southwestern frontier.

These were rough times in the history of Israel. One cannot help wondering what the condition of things would have been if Israel had not yielded to the idolatry of surrounding nations, but had remained loyal to Jehovah, establishing a strong federal government with its center the Sanctuary of Jehovah. We should then have had a united people instead of an assemblage of jealous and sometimes hostile tribes. Then the whole land might have come into the possession of Israel; then no enemies of alien blood and faith would have remained within their borders; then they had gone on conquering and to conquer, with God as their Leader, and with his service as their dominant motive.

¹ Judges iv, 5.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIFTEEN JUDGES.

WE have seen that, after the death of Joshua and the elders, there was a succession of Judges who exercised authority over the nation. Some of these Judges, however, were placed over only a portion of the nation. There were, as already stated, fifteen of them in all. In the Book of Judges twelve of them are named. Abimelech is not mentioned there, and the names of Eli and Samuel are omitted as they are recorded in the First Book of Samuel. With the exception of Eli, and possibly Samuel, none of them were taken from the tribe of Levi, and no notice is taken of any military service performed by Tola, Ibzan, Elon, or Abdon. During the time that they filled this office, the land seems to have enjoyed a condition of comparative peace. Jephthah and the three Judges who succeeded him seem to have limited their authority to northeastern Israel, beyond the Jordan, while the scene of Samson's exploits was southwestern Israel. Some have supposed that he was contemporary with Eli who judged Israel at Shiloh. These Judges did not constitute an organic part of the government; their authority was exercised by the common consent of the people. The general affairs of the several tribes were managed by their elders, partly according to rules contained in the Mosaic law, but still more largely according to various ancient usages. The tribes were not bound by any permanent civil head; they, therefore, acted each one by its own decision, or a few in concert, and often independently of the nation as a whole.

It may be well, at this point, to have a definite statement regarding the order of the succession of these Judges, together with the length of service of each one. The dignity was conferred upon the Judges for life. There were, however, periods when there were no Judges, and the commonwealth was without appointed rulers. There being no central government, each tribe acted for itself, and, indeed, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes."¹ East of the Jordan, Ehud, Jephthah, Elon, and Jair delivered the people from foreign foes and governed the tribes. Barak and Tola governed the northern tribes, Abdon the central, and Ibzan and Samson the southern. These Judges exercised an authority but little inferior to that of kings. They were the protectors of the people, the defenders of religion, the avengers of crime, and particularly the opponents of idolatry. They received no salary for their service and they lived without the splendor of palaces, equipages, or attendants. We give the names of the Judges and the time of their service, with the length of service of each, as far as these facts can be discovered in the mass of vague and sometimes contradictory statements accessible:

	YEARS.		YEARS.
Othniel.....	40	Jair.....	22
Ehud.....	80	Jephthah.....	6
Shamgar.....	unknown	Ibzan.....	7
Deborah and Barak.....	40	Elon.....	10
Gideon.....	40	Abdon.....	8
Abimelech.....	3	Samson.....	20
Tola.....	23	Eli.....	40
		Samuel, about 12	.

According to this the period from Othniel to Saul, including the years of oppression, is about 490 years. But according to other chronologies it is only about 310 years, of which period 111

¹ Judges xvii, 6.

were under the oppression of foreign foes. But, doubtless, some of these periods overlap each other, and perhaps it is impossible to be certain regarding the length of the period, or to reconcile the statements in different books of the Old and New Testaments. Doubtless, there are facts with which we are not familiar, which, if known, would make all entirely clear. We are also able to give a tentative table of oppressors and deliverers:

OPPRESSORS.	YEARS.	DELIVERERS.
1. Mesopotamians.....	8	Othniel.
2. Moabites	18	Ehud.
3. North Canaanites.....	20	Deborah and Barak.
4. Midianites	7	Gideon.
5. Ammonites	18	Jephthah.
6. Philistines.....	40	Samson.

All are agreed that the time from the death of Joshua to the election of Saul was at least a period over 400 years, although the exact time is variously estimated by different authorities.¹ The recollection of the wonderful story of God's deliverance from Egypt, and of his protection during the Exodus and the sojourn in the Wilderness, was never effaced from the minds of the people of Israel. Although they often wandered far from God, they still retained memories of these remarkable displays of power, for their protection, and for the destruction of their foes. They were still surrounded by warlike neighbors, anxious to reconquer the fair land; and there was constant need of the heroic men raised up by God to be the deliverers of Israel. The Phœnicians and other Canaanites, it was to be expected, would be in a state of constant rebellion against the victorious invaders; but had the tribes remained united under brave leaders, they would have driven out their foes and have possessed the land in peace. But with the death of Joshua and the dispersion of the tribes to their respective territories, the golden opportunity was lost forever. The Phœnicians, in Joshua's days, still paid tribute to Egypt as they had done for 400 years previous; and Egypt, in turn, gave the Phœnicians great trading advantages. The flag of the Phœnicians, it is said, waved at once in Britain and in the Indian Ocean, they having made an extensive immigration from Palestine to escape the sword of Joshua. The Israelites must long have coveted the wealth of Sidon and other seaport towns; but they seemed unable to secure their possession. The long spears and the terrible iron chariots of the lowland races were too much for the valor of Israel. But their own hills commanded the passes by which commerce flowed into Egypt, Arabia, Babylon, and Assyria.

The first cry of distress, however, came to Israel from new foes. An invader from the distant banks of the Euphrates spread consternation through Israel. A Mesopotamian king, Chushan-Nishathaim, invaded the land, and for eight weary years kept Israel under the yoke of bondage. National life and primitive faith had largely disappeared in Israel. The people intermarried with the remnants of the heathen races remaining in the land, and too often joined with them in the worship of Baal together with that of Jehovah, or in the worship of Baal to the exclusion of that of Jehovah. Of this invader, the only one from the far East during the period covered by this book, we know but little. Trouble brought forth its proper fruits in Israel by leading the sufferers back to the God of their fathers. God raised up for them, when they honored his covenant and experienced a revival of faith, Othniel — "the Lion of God." He was a powerful prince or lion of the tribe of Judah. He drove the oppressors from the district in which he ruled, and forty years of peace were secured by his bravery and loyalty to God and Israel. During his administration Israel was true to God; but after his death the people fell back into their old sins, and again suffered the punishment of another bondage. Othniel was probably the only Judge connected with the tribe of Judah. He is first

¹ Acts xiii, 20.

mentioned on the occasion of the taking of Kirjath-sepher, "the town of the book," or Debir, as it was afterward called. This town was in the mountainous territory about twelve miles southwest of Hebron within the border of Judea, and was assigned to Caleb, the Kenizzite. As we have seen, Caleb promised to give his daughter Achsah to him who should capture the city.¹ Othniel was the victor, and with the promised bride he received, in addition to her previous dowry, the upper and nether springs in the neighborhood. When the spirit of the Lord came upon Othniel victory over this foe was secured, and Israel had rest for forty years.

We are now brought into contact with a new enemy, the king of Moab, whose name was Eglon, meaning "the bullock." This was a name of contempt which was probably given him by Israel. Associated with him were the Ammonites and Amalekites. With their help he smote Israel, and secured possession of Jericho, which he made his seat of government. For eighteen years he exercised authority over the people. Once more Israel was brought into a condition of penitence, once more cried unto the Lord, and once more secured deliverance. These Ammonites and Amalekites were the old enemies of Israel. They overpowered Benjamin, doubtless after a bitter struggle, and took Jericho, which had been partially rebuilt, possibly on another site. The years of Eglon's possession were years of great oppression. Then arose Ehud. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, and was a young man of more wiliness than honor. Ehud was chosen to superintend the payment at Jericho of the tribute of his people; but he prepared himself for a different service. Hiding his dagger, a cubit long, on his right thigh under his mantle, in which position his rank entitled him to wear it, he determined to end the king's life. The tribute was paid to the king in person, and an opportunity was thus afforded Ehud to notice the details of the house and all its domestic arrangements. The tribute bearer was dismissed to his home; he then went to the graven images which were set up at Gilgal, returned soon to Eglon, sending him a message of his desire to see him. The king commanded silence, and all withdrew. He was in his summer apartment on the roof of the house for coolness, and there he awaited Ehud's communication. Ehud intimated that his message was from God. Eglon, arose, perhaps to defend himself, or perhaps in a spirit of reverence for the God of the Hebrews. He was thus exposed to the blow of the dexterous Ehud, who, being left-handed like many of his tribe, snatched from under his cloak the dagger, and plunged it to the hilt in Eglon's body.² After the assassination, Ehud hastily passed through the anteroom, locked the doors and quickly and quietly left without exciting suspicion. Not until some time later did the servants of the king learn of his sad fate. Ehud, in the meantime, had escaped to the woody slopes in the southern part of the hill country of Ephraim. With his trumpet he summoned the men of war, and soon a multitude of armed men were about him. Thus supported he rushed to the fords of the Jordan,³ and soon 10,000 men of valor fell before his fierce attack;⁴ being intercepted at the fords of the Jordan, they were slain to a man. The enemy was thus slaughtered or driven from the land and eighty years of peace followed.⁵

We now come to the Philistines who made the next inroad on Israel. They are to appear often in the history from this time onward. They were long the bitter foes of Israel; yet it is a curious fact, bitter though their enmity to Israel was, that their name is forever associated with the promised land, for the word Palestine is only another form of the name Philistia. They went from the maritime plains to make their raids into the Hebrew uplands. Their name from this time on, for many years, was the synonym of all that was cruel in opposition to Israel, and all that roused Israel to oppose their oppressors. Their attack brought into the history one of the strongest characters of this unique period; for the Philistine invasion brings before us the huge warrior Shamgar, with his great ox-goad. He was the son of Anath, and

¹ Joshua xv, 17; Judges i, 13, iii, 9, 10.

Judges iii, 15-22.

³ Judges iii, 26-28.

⁴ Judges iii, 29.

⁵ Judges iii, 30.

was the third Judge of Israel.¹ His judgeship began in a time of great insecurity and distress. The highways became impassable.² The people were obliged to creep about in the night, avoiding the beaten paths and the open country. They dared not partake of the water from the public wells lest the water might be poisoned, and at times they could not even approach the wells, as the enemy had made them inaccessible. The tributary Canaanites were in league with their independent kinsmen, the Philistines. The people of Israel were finally obliged to hide themselves in the mountains. It would seem that their arms were taken from them in harmony with the policy clearly adopted later by the same people. The whole nation was in alarm and despair. Then arose the rough and heroic Shamgar. He seems to have been plowing when the Philistines made their approach. He had no time to get better weapons, if such weapons were to be had. The ox-goad, however, in the hand of a man with strong arms and brave heart, was a powerful weapon. It was often a shaft eight feet long and six inches in circumference at the larger end. On the one end was a sharp prickle to keep the oxen in motion, and on the other end was a paddle used to remove from the plow the clay which naturally clung to it. With this weapon he made his desperate assault, and slew 600 of the Philistines.³ Perhaps we are not to understand that he slew them with his own hand, but rather that he put himself at the head of a band of peasants, also armed with ox-goads. It is still common to ascribe to a leader the victories achieved by his followers. This remarkable victory struck terror into the hearts of the Canaanites and Philistines, and gave Israel at least a temporary respite. This deliverance could not, in the nature of the case, be permanent. We are not surprised, therefore, to learn that the country continued still to be oppressed until after the deliverance which resulted from Deborah's great victory. Israel was her own greatest enemy. She constantly tended toward the idolatrous practices of the surrounding tribes; she constantly relapsed into the habits of her heathen neighbors, and so brought upon herself the displeasure of Jehovah.

We now enter upon one of the most famous of the many deliverances of Israel. A formidable confederacy was formed by Jabin, a northern king of the Canaanites.⁴ He subdued God's disobedient people, and for twenty years held them in apparently hopeless bondage. The years of peace mentioned often are limited only to certain portions of the country, while in other portions the oppressor was present and the people were crushed under his iron heel. Jabin's military power was great; his general, Sisera, commanded 900 war chariots,⁵ and Israel did not have even one. He, or his allies, held strong fortresses at Taanach, and Megiddo, and Beth-shean, on the south of Esdraelon, and these strongholds prevented the southern tribes from giving help to their brethren in the north in their great distress.⁶ The whole country was reduced to a sad state of despair; all forms of trade practically ceased, and again the people hid themselves in mountains and valleys, or behind the strong walls of their towns. Elders and people alike lost heart and hope, and no one seemed called of God or man to be the deliverer in this trying hour. The population seemed utterly paralyzed in the presence of the overwhelming numbers and superior equipments of the Canaanites. There was scarcely a spear, shield or sword to be found among the 40,000 men.⁷ At this critical hour a woman came forward to be the deliverer of the people. She was the Joan of Arc of that early day. A lofty patriotism and an unquenchable religious enthusiasm filled her soul. She pondered long over the misfortunes of her people, and while she mused the fire burned in her brave heart. Then, at last, her heroic soul burst into a flame of zeal for the overthrow of Israel's foes. This brave woman's name was Deborah. The word means "the bee," and she certainly was worthy of her name in her power to give a sting to the foes and honey to the friends of Israel. She was a prophetess, and was used by God as his instrument to rouse the depressed nation and to strike the proud

¹ Judges iii, 31.² Judges v, 6.³ Judges iii, 31.⁴ Judges iv, 2.⁵ Judges iv, 3.⁶ Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," II, p. 466.⁷ Judges v, 8.



DAVID ROBERTS

MOUNT TABOR FROM PLAIN OF ESDRAELON.

enemy. No narrow tribal loyalty bounded her national faith, hope, and love. For a while she lived in the south in the hills of Ephraim between Ramah and Bethel. She knew of the sorrows of the northern tribes and sympathized with them with a tenderness as marked as her bravery was great. She was the wife of Lapidoth, and under her solitary palm tree she judged Israel.¹ She sent for Barak, or Barca—"the thunderbolt," or "lightning"—and directed him to attack Sisera, assuring him of victory. He, however, refused to make the attempt unless she accompanied him in the expedition; he seemed to be much less resolute and heroic than Deborah.² Bravely she went forward, but faithfully and somewhat sarcastically she reminded him that the expedition would be victorious, but the glory would be a woman's and not a man's. It is interesting to know that the palm tree under which she judged was near the place where the nurse of Rebekah, another and earlier Deborah, was buried under an oak. Beautiful is it that that early record, in which there is scarcely found a place for the deeds and graves of statesmen and kings, gives mention of the burial of the nurse of Rebekah. Barak was a northern warrior of the tribe of Naphtali which was near to the fortress of King Jabin, and which suffered much at his hand. To Barak she gave the command of the God of Israel that he should lead an army of patriots against the hosts of Sisera. Her presence roused Zebulun and Naphtali to join the conquering army; but Dan and Asher, on the seashore, failed to respond to her stirring summons. Reuben came not up to the help of the Lord and Deborah and Barak against the mighty foe. The dwellers in Meroz, a town at the head of the pass to Beth-shean, did not listen to the divine voice, and have been stigmatized forever on the page of the inspired history.³ Behold Barak with his 10,000 infantry, marching to the battle!⁴ He has already gained a reputation for bravery and loyalty, as his name clearly shows. Already his fame has reached the distant confines of Benjamin. Messages were sent far and near, and 10,000 men gathered from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun to the gathering-place at Tabor. Issachar sent bands of volunteers; and the Ephraimites came from their hills, and the valiant sons of Benjamin, the most warlike of the tribes, skilled in the bow and famous with the sling,⁵ using either the right hand or the left with equal skill, came to do battle for God and Israel. Manasseh, east and west of the Jordan, sent loyal men and brave chiefs. For the first time since the early days of Joshua, the national spirit had been roused to a high pitch of patriotism and enthusiasm. The refusal of Meroz to participate in the stirring scenes in this historic hour brought down a curse which seems to have resulted in the destruction of her homes, if not the extermination of her people. Unfortunately the discussion by the brooks of Reuben ended in its clans leaving their brethren to fight unaided, while they remained among their hills and pastures. Gad also refused to come. Dan would rather remain, with cowardly indifference, with his boats at Joppa and Asher in the bays of Acre.⁶ The great tribe of Judah, and the tribe of Simeon seem to have kept aloof, jealousy of Ephraim probably being the cause. All honor to Zebulun, who busily and bravely enrolled her volunteers! All honor to Naphtali, dwelling among her hills! These tribes imperiled their lives; these tribes won immortal victory.

Up the sides of Mount Tabor, rising 1,500 feet from the plain of Esdraelon, the hosts of Israel climb. On its top, which is treeless and which forms a comparatively level circuit of half an hour's walk, they meet in battle array.⁷ No more advantageous location could have been chosen; for here Israel could not be attacked by the chariots of the Canaanites, and had, moreover, a lofty watchtower from whose summit all the movements of the Canaanites could easily be seen. Sisera knew that the tribes of Israel were assembling for battle. With him as allies were the Kenites, who, though now on terms of peace with Jabin, had hitherto been frequently friendly with Israel. This Arab tribe was in a sense the kinsmen of Israel, because

¹ Judges iv, 4, 5. ² Judges iv, 6-9. ³ Judges v, 23. ⁴ Judges iv, 10. ⁵ Judges xx, 16. ⁶ Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," II, p. 470. ⁷ Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," II, p. 472. See Stanley, and Smith's "Bible Dictionary."

of the marriage of Moses to the daughter of Jethro, one of their sheiks. But now they betrayed Israel, and soon the wife of their chief was to betray Israel's arch enemy. The word Sisera means "the Leader." He was brave and heroic, and worthy of a better cause than that in which he was engaged. He collected his forces in Esdraelon; for he needed the open space which this plain afforded for the movements of his 900 chariots. His headquarters were at Taanach, a Canaanitish town and fortress on the southwestern side of the plain, on a spur of the Carmel range, and "now clad with olive trees and marked by a stone village still called Taanach." To the northeast, sixteen miles away, rose Tabor. Its top was visible above the hills of Little Hermon. This plain, many writers have reminded us, has in all ages been the battlefield of Palestine. It lies north of the range of Carmel and the mountains of Samaria. It is twenty miles long from east to west, and ten to twelve in width. The Bay of Acre constitutes its western boundary, and the mountains of Gilboa, Little Hermon, and Tabor define its eastern boundary. It also sends arms down to the valley of the Jordan. It presents an undulating surface of great beauty and equal fertility, with an average level of 400 feet above the sea. For thousands of years it has been both the highway of travel and the battlefield of nations. The history of what has occurred on this plain would be, in no small sense, the history of the world. Perhaps no territory of the same size under the heavens has so often been fattened by the blood of the slain of so many nations. Here armies in many wars have encamped. Here fought Thothmes III.; here Rameses II., and Rameses III. Here Pharaoh-Necho won the sad battle of Megiddo in which the beautiful King Josiah was slain, and so terrible was the slaughter of this great battle that the prophetic conflict mentioned in the Book of Revelation is called, because of the name Megiddo, "Armageddon."¹ Here have fought, in turn, Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Arabs, Jews, Gentiles, Saracens, Turks, Crusaders, Druses, and French. On this historic plain they pitched their tents, and their banners were moistened with the dews of Hermon and Tabor. Napoleon Bonaparte, on his disastrous march from Egypt into Syria, amid all his experiences of the horrors of battlefields, was touched by the tender memories which came to him of Tabor and Christ, while marching or camping on this plain. In the vicinity, on the mountains of Gilboa, the fierce battles were fought in which Saul and Jonathan so tragically perished.

The signal for the fierce attack was given by the brave Deborah. Calling to Barak she said, "Up! this, this and no other is the day!"² Her stirring words met with an instant response. Barak took the field with his 10,000 infantry. The ill-armed host bravely poured down from the security of the mountains and rushed upon the chariots of the enemy drawn up in the terrible plain. A terrible storm of hail and sleet from the east burst over the plain, beating on the backs of the Hebrews and in the faces of the Canaanites. "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera;"³ the rain descended in torrents, the wind blew with fury, and the flood came with resistless might. The deep red soil became a quagmire in which the chariots sunk, unable to move. The water-courses which had been dry were now filled with rushing torrents, and in the terrible confusion the Canaanites were routed, overwhelmed, and destroyed with terrible slaughter.⁴ The marshy ground, and the swelling of the river Kishon, were divine instruments to punish the foes of Israel and of Israel's God. Sisera leaped from his chariot and fled for his life to the northeast, among the slopes of Tabor.⁵ He fled from death on the field of battle to be murdered in his sleep, by the Kenite woman in whose tent he sought food and repose. We follow the flying general as he hastens for his life over the plains. The tents of the Arabs are to-day much as they were in that day; they are large and held up by nine poles on which rest the coverings of camel's-hair cloth, or the hides of oxen. The ropes were fixed to pegs driven into the earth by a huge wooden mallet.⁶ The tent is divided

¹ Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," II, p. 473.

² Judges iv, 14.

³ Judges v, 20.

⁴ Judges v, 21.

⁵ Judges iv, 15.

⁶ See Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," II, p. 475.

into a part on the left for the men, and the part on the right forming the chamber for the women. The bed is only a mat on the ground, and the cloak worn by day serves as a cover by night. In the chamber for women are gathered the cooking utensils, the water skins, the milk, and the butter. Such, probably, was the tent of Heber at this time. At its entrance Sisera in his haste found Jael, the wife of the sheik, and, as there was peace between this Kenite tribe and Jabin, he asked for shelter. Graciously, but treacherously, she received him. What her purpose at the first was we cannot tell; but her subsequent acts indicated her determination to betray her guest. She brought him a preparation of curdled milk called "lebben," which, while refreshing to the weary traveler, tends soon to produce deep sleep.¹ Instead of giving him the water for which he asked, Jael brought him the lebben in a special dish.² Probably she knew the effect which it would induce. The wearied man, broken in spirit because of his defeat, eagerly partakes of the welcome beverage. Soon he is wrapped in deepest slumber, feeling perfectly safe in the tent of Heber. Carefully Jael covers him with a cloak. It is a thrilling moment in her life! Shall she violate her repeated assurances of Arab hospitality? Her tribe is now an ally of the host of Jabin; but she cannot forget that Israel is a race of her own blood. Strange thoughts come to her as she gazes on the sleeping Sisera, the foe of Israel now so unconscious and helpless. Shall she strike a deadly blow and deliver Israel from the oppressor? See her silently, restlessly moving about her tent! Great thoughts, cruel thoughts, murderous thoughts, but, withal, patriotic thoughts, stir her soul. Now she takes up one of the tent pegs, and now with mallet in hand—the mallet used to drive the pegs into the ground when the tents are erected—she stealthily creeps to the side of the sleeping general. She lifts the mallet with one hand, and holds the peg with the other just above his temple. What a moment in a woman's life! Down comes the heavy mallet with a crushing blow, and through the temples of the sleeping man the tent pin is driven with such force that it pierces the ground on which the unconscious victim is lying! Convulsively he leaps, violently he groans in agony; a moment more and all is over, and now lifeless he lies in the tent in which he sought food and shelter. See her standing over him as he sinks dying, and then as he lies dead!³

The results of this battle were immediately great and far-reaching. The Israelites learned a lesson of national union; a lesson which they never fully forgot in their subsequent history. The Canaanites learned memorable lessons from the heroic courage of Israel, and the resistless might of Israel's God. This was the first great victory which Israel had achieved since the days of Joshua. With a handful of men and God on their side, they overcame the mighty hosts of trained warriors. They saw that their national humiliation was because of their neglect of religious duty; they could not forget the lesson, that when they abandoned their idolatry they secured the favor of God, and, at the same time, found national deliverance.

Deborah was the possessor of poetic genius, as truly as of martial valor and national loyalty. On this grand occasion she embodied her patriotic thoughts in rhythmic verse which delighted the hearts of Israel then, and which still sings in glowing notes on the page of sacred history. Her song is one of wonderful poetic fire; it is a lyric which only a great soul, under the inspiration of a great occasion, could sing. It inspired the hearts of all the tribes, and gave them hope for national unity and glory. No wonder that Deborah secured wide and enduring fame for wisdom and bravery; and no wonder that she became the center of moral and judicial power over the people whom she had so triumphantly delivered. Joyously did the children of Israel come up to her for judgment. It is an interesting fact that this "Song of Deborah" is the only example of the outpouring of a poetic and prophetic soul recorded in the sacred history from the death of Moses to the times of Hannah and Samuel. This glorious song gives God the praise for the victory achieved; this thought is, indeed, its keynote from its beginning

¹ See authorities referred to by Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," II, p. 475.

² Judges v, 25.

³ Judges v, 26, 27.

to its close. No one can read a literal version of the lyric without appreciating its poetic genius, its patriotic spirit, and its divine inspiration. Other nations have given the world great women in time of great need, and in the history of other nations, also, thunder and rain, lightning and hail have contributed to the defeat of enemies and to the triumph of national valor; but perhaps in no nation was there a braver leader among women than Deborah, the mother in Israel, and perhaps in no nation did patriotic valor and divine benediction more fully unite with the stars in their courses in opposing the enemy and in securing victory for the national cause.

No one can give unqualified praise to Jael for her violation of Arabian hospitality, in the treacherous murder of which she was guilty. But we must not judge the acts of that rude time by the standard of morality established by Jesus Christ, and observed, partially at least, even in warfare by civilized nations in modern times. Jael thought only of the relation of this cruel deed to the freedom of the people whose blood flowed in her own veins. All of us, however, are conscious of the stirring sentiment evoked by the closing words of Deborah's magnificent song: "So perish all thy enemies, O Jehovah; but they that love thee are as the sun, when he goes forth in his might."¹ So the land had rest for forty years.

CHAPTER VIII.

GIDEON, "FAINT, YET PURSUING."

AFTER the great victory won by Deborah and Barak over Sisera, forty years of peace ensued. This was a welcome repose after a time of great national excitement. Peace was necessary to the development of this new territory, and to the stability and prosperity of the people. They were now more fully united as a nation than they had been since the days of Joshua. War against foreign foes is often necessary to prevent the fomenting of dissension on domestic soil. Many a ruler in modern times has favored a foreign war in order to prevent a civil uprising. This condition of things often will explain the declaration of foreign war in European countries. Indeed, the war now (1895) raging between China and Japan is doing much to unify the latter country, and perhaps to prevent outbreaks against the government in the former. The victory over Sisera left the people of Israel comparatively united, heartily enthusiastic, and more generally loyal to God and country than they had been for many years. But now, at the end of the period named, new enemies arose—enemies who were fierce and terrible, wild hordes from the desert. They were also old foes of Israel, foes whom Israel had fought at Sinai, foes who defeated Israel at Hormah, when they first attempted to enter Palestine, and foes whose land in central Canaan Ephraim claimed as her own. These were the Midianites, Amalekites, and other nomadic tribes, known as the sons of the East. It is difficult for us to be sure of our dates while stating the incidents recorded in the Book of Judges. As we have before intimated, some of the events were probably contemporaneous; but it seems quite certain that the rise of Gideon, the greatest of all the Judges, belonged to a period very much later than that of Deborah. Unfortunately, the very blessings of providence in the peace and prosperity which Israel had enjoyed after Deborah's victory were misused so as to

¹ Judges v, 31.

See the graphic account of this battle by Stanley; especially his reference to battles, ancient and modern, when the stars fought in their courses. The translation given by him may well be compared with that given by Dean Milman and by Dr. Geikie. See, also, the discriminating and eloquent comments on the battle and the slaughter of Sisera in the "Bible for Learners," by Oort, Hooykaas and Kuenen, Volume I, pages 369-75.

lower the moral tone of the people. All blessings are closely akin to curses. Privileges unused become evils of an exaggerated character. The tribes forgot the abhorrence of idolatry which Deborah had cherished and manifested. Once more they became indifferent to their national interests, and to the claims of God, their true king; and so they became the easy prey of vigorous foes ambitious of conquest. These tribes of Israel once more repeat their too familiar history of disobedience and consequent punishment; then of penitence toward God and deliverance wrought by God. As a scourge for the punishment of his people, God used these wild sons of the East. The home of these Arab tribes had been in the east and south of Palestine; they were Midianites who had gradually spread northward from the Peninsula of Sinai. The rich plains and valleys of Palestine had always possessed peculiar attractions to these children of the desert; and they now swept with resistless power over large parts of the land. They banded together in a host of more than 120,000 men, capable of bearing arms.¹ Passing the fords of the Jordan with households and herds, they invaded Palestine, so that their coming was compared to a flight of locusts, both in numbers and in destructiveness. They pitched their tents and fed their camels in the rich cornfields of Israel. The people were reduced to the most general and humiliating servitude ever experienced by Israel. They were obliged to flee to the mountains and to hide themselves in obscure caves.² All over the land the soil remained uncultivated, the cattle were neglected or destroyed, a grievous famine ensued, and disease stalked through the land. The inroads of these invaders were thus on a gigantic scale; and they were repeated summer after summer. Wherever grain was growing it was trampled under foot or eaten by flocks and camels. Crops that were threshed were carried off, as were also sheep, oxen, and asses wherever these marauders could find them in mountain, valley, or plain. Two emirs, Zebah, "the man-killer," and Zalmunna, "the pitiless," with two subordinate chiefs, Oreb, "the Raven," and Zeeb, "the Wolf," came arrayed in scarlet cloaks³ with chains of gold and crescent shaped ornaments adorning their camels and their own persons. A most vivid picture is given in the Book of Judges of the dazzling splendor of these primitive chiefs, as well as of the gorgeous raiment, ear and nose jewels, of their wives and daughters.⁴ They came up from the depths of the Jordan valley, past the meadows of Beth-shean and finally pitched their tents on the east end of the great plain of Esdraelon. Dr. Geikie quotes Leslie Porter as having seen a similar host, though on a smaller scale, in the spring of 1857, when the Bedouin Sheik, Akeil Agha, assembled his men in Esdraelon to divide the plunder secured in the massacre of the Kurds at Hattin. He represents them as spreading over the plain, countless as locusts, and their camels like the sand on the seashore for number; and, as he gazed on the fierce crowds of this disorderly army, he was reminded of the great invasion of the Midianites in the days of Gideon.⁵

Israel was finally led, in her terrible distress, to call upon God for succor. The people had long refused to listen to the voice of prophets, urging them penitently to return to God and so avert the terrible calamity from which they were suffering. When the tale of bricks was doubled, then was Moses born; when the knell of liberty was sounding, the trumpet of hope was heard; so once more man's necessity was God's opportunity. Marvelous are God's displays of grace and power to those who return in penitence to him. God always has the man for the hour. To-day in humble cottages in quiet valleys God is training up boys who will be the leaders of the Church in the next generation — boys who are to be founders of republics, and leaders of kingdoms, and pillars in the Church of the living God. So in the dark days of Israel did God mercifully furnish deliverers for his penitent people. In one of the poorest, or at least feeblest, clans of western Manasseh, that descended from Abiezer, was born in the house of Joash at Ophrah, probably near Shechem, the future deliverer. Gideon, the fifth Judge of Israel, was a man of noble person, and of a worthy family line. Joash might boast of

¹ Judges viii, 10.² Judges vi, 2.³ Judges viii, 26.⁴ *Ibid.*⁵ "Hours with the Bible," II, p. 486.

magnificent sons, "each like the son of a king."¹ But there was deep sorrow in the father's heart, for all his brave boys save the youngest—the heroic Gideon—had fallen on Mount Tabor in the numerous and terrible fights with the fierce Midianites.² The years of submission were marked by outbreaks on the part of the sons of Joash and others who hated the oppressor and loved their native land. We look with gratitude and delight upon this youngest son, Gideon, the "hewer" or "tree-feller," who had already hewn down Baal's altar and the image of Ashtoreth. Already he had proved himself to be "a mighty man of valor";³ already, it is evident, the Midianites had felt the power of his strong arm and brave heart. His fields were at Ophrah, on the very scene of the invasion. When he comes before us he has grown sons, and seems to have been a man of considerable wealth, as he had his own body of servants and was accompanied by his armor-bearer.⁴ But he was modest as he was brave; and he had no thought of heading a revolt until he was summoned by God to lead his followers against the foe. His call by God is an illustration of God's adaptation of his methods to the spiritual infancy and primitive manners of the time. Gideon's talents had hitherto been latent, for the most part; but God now appeared to him in a vision. In order the better to conceal his wheat from the Midianite marauders, he was engaged in threshing it in a cave. He hardly dared to allow the wheat to become ripe lest it should be stolen from the field; and he did not dare thresh it in the open field, but in a cave. There would be less danger of discovery by threshing it with a flail on the earth than on a wooden floor, especially if it were trodden in public by the feet of oxen or threshed with a roller. We see him, then, thus engaged on the ground by the rock-hewn winepress.⁵ Interesting preternatural signs convinced him that his strange visitant was a celestial being. Subsequent facts seem to show that this visitor was none other than he whom we have come to know and adore as Jesus. Gideon offered his heavenly guest a present appropriate to a superior being—a kid and a small portion of flour.⁶ These he laid on a rock. The mysterious visitor touched them, and immediately fire arose from the rock which consumed them as a divine sacrifice;⁷ and immediately, also, a new spirit from God came upon Gideon. The narrative tells us that he was clothed with this spirit.⁸ He signalized the occasion by building an altar on the spot made sacred by the visit of the angel; and this altar he dedicated to Jehovah-Shalom, "Jehovah-peace," Jehovah who will bring days of peace and prosperity.⁹ This name is itself a benediction and a prophecy. Gideon proceeded to prove his faith by his works, and at once made war on the idolatry of his own neighborhood, throwing down the altar of Baal at midnight.¹⁰

It would seem that his father, Joash, had yielded to the evil tendencies of his time so far as to have built this altar to Baal on the top of the cliff in which the winepress was located; he seems, also, to have had an Asherah, or "grove," which was really a wooden pillar and was intended to symbolize the goddess of fertility, near the altar to Baal. But if an altar to Jehovah was to be built, all other altars must be cast down. So Gideon bravely threw down the altar of Baal, and with the help of his servants cut up the Asherah for fuel. He then laid it on the altar to Jehovah, using it as fuel to consume, in sacrifice to him, the bullock which his father seems to have consecrated to Baal.¹¹ This was a daring deed. The people were fearful lest they should incur the wrath of their deities, and they were likely to stone Gideon when they discovered what he had done in the darkness of midnight. Joash, however, by his ironical question saved his son, rebuked the people, and threw contempt on Baal. "Will ye plead for Baal?" asks Joash; and he answered his question by saying, "Let Baal plead for himself."¹² Because of this circumstance Gideon was called Jernbbaal, meaning "let Baal plead." The irony which Joash used as an argument against a god who could not

¹ Judges viii, 18.² Judges viii, 18.³ Judges vi, 12.⁴ Judges vi, 27.⁵ Judges vi, 11.⁶ Judges vi, 19.⁷ Judges vi, 21.⁸ Judges vi, 34.⁹ Judges vi, 24.¹⁰ Judges vi, 27.¹¹ Judges vi, 28. See Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," II, p. 488.¹² Judges vi, 32.

defend himself was a common argument with the worshipers of the true God against the deities of all false religions.

Stirring events now await our consideration. Great numbers of invaders are encamped on the plain of Jezreel, and the Arab hosts have come to make their annual invasion, and to revel in their annual depredation.¹ Gideon has been called of God to lead the hosts of Israel; but he demanded a sign from heaven which God mercifully granted him. He shows a boldness in speaking to God which came perilously near being guilty unbelief; he asked for signs after God had given direct promises. But the trying circumstances in which he was placed may justify the otherwise culpable caution which he manifested. He asked that the dews, which fall so plenteously in that land, might one night fall only on a fleece which he had spread; and the next morning the fleece was saturated with dew, and the ground was dry. The next night the ground was steeped with moisture and the fleece was perfectly dry.² Some have found in this double sign illustrations of Gideon's own character, he at times being warm and zealous while the people were indifferent or cold, and he at times calm and cool while all about him were stirred with excitement.³

After this test he was prepared for the invasion of the foe. He sounded the war trumpet through his own district, and his own clan of Abiezer responded with enthusiasm to his patriotic call. Messages were immediately sent through western Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and these tribes promptly and enthusiastically obeyed their leader's summons. All doubt was now removed by the signs that had been given by God, and the response made by the tribes. No fewer than 32,000 men gathered about him ready for battle. Strangely enough the army was too large to achieve a victory which God designed to contribute to his own glory; an army of this size would claim the victory for itself and deny God the glory which is his due. Proclamations were therefore made that all who desired to return home—all whose valor could not be relied upon in trial—should have the opportunity to leave the field and go to their homes. At once 22,000 men in a cowardly spirit withdrew.⁴ Poor Gideon! Happy Gideon! Heroic and triumphant Gideon! Even the 10,000 remaining were too many for the victory to be achieved. These were again to be reduced by a singular process, whose meaning it is not easy to fully understand. Near Mount Gilboa flows a copious spring, known as "the Spring of Trembling," because of the striking event which then occurred in Gideon's history. It forms a great pool of pure water, semi-circular in shape, and large enough to permit many to drink at the same time. Gideon's men were now led to this pool to drink.⁵ Those who, with a desire for their own comfort, knelt down to drink, were dismissed; but those who, in their haste and earnest desire to engage with the foe, stood up, lifting the water to their lips in the hollow of their hand, as is still the custom in oriental lands, were retained.⁶ The Hebrew word that is here employed, and which is translated "lapped," is a word formed from the sound which dogs make when their tongues assume the shape of a spoon, and when they hurriedly satisfy their thirst. In Eastern lands, men passing through streams throw the water so rapidly into their mouths that the hand is after the second supply before the first is fully swallowed. Only 300 men lapped. Surely Gideon was now to be pitied. But God promised him that, with the 300 that lapped, he would save Israel, and deliver the Midianites into his hand.⁷

With these 300 Gideon resolved to assail the numerous hosts of the foe, in a night attack which was as marked by ingenuity as by daring, by stratagem as by courage, and by a victory as glorious as the attempt was heroic. An additional augury was given the leader to encourage him in his great undertaking. When the quiet and security of the night had come, he and his armor-bearer, Phurah, resolved to make matters doubly sure by going into the camp of the

¹ Judges vi, 33.² Judges vi, 40.³ Ewald, referred to by Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," II, p. 489.⁴ Judges vii, 3.⁵ Judges vii, 5.⁶ Judges vii, 6.⁷ Judges vii, 7.

Midianites below. Stealthily they crept down the hillside unnoticed by the camp, which, according to the custom of its people, was without sentinels. Thousands of Arabs lay wrapped in slumber, while their innumerable camels lay also about them in peaceful repose. One of the sleepers was awake, as Gideon and Phurah approached, and they had the joy of hearing him tell his comrade of a strange dream which he had dreamed.¹ How earnestly Gideon and his armor-bearer listened; and how joyously do they hear the dream and the interpretation thereof!² The dreamer had seen a thin, round barley cake, such as was common to the people and the time, rolling into the host of the Midianites. It ceased not its progress till it reached the royal tent, in the center of the camp, and when the tent was reached it fell flat upon the ground. The comrade, to whom the dream was narrated, immediately replied, "This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel; for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host." With a joy which we can better imagine than describe, Gideon listened to this explanation of the dream. All was again quiet in the Midianite camp; sleepers and dreamers, unconscious of danger, sweetly slept to be waked a little later by the blast of horns, the crashing of pitchers, the flashing of torches, and the shouts of the Israelites. We watch Gideon and his companion as, with thankful and excited hearts, they return. We see them climbing back to their companies. Soon he sends the three companies to their respective posts, and each man is provided with a horn, a torch, and an earthen pot, and about eleven o'clock at night, as it is believed, the preconcerted signal is given. Instantly the crash of 300 pitchers is heard, the blaze of 300 torches is seen, and the terrible shouts of Israel are heard, breaking the stillness of the midnight hour, the voices all joining at once from three opposite quarters, shouting "the Sword of Jehovah and Gideon."³ A terrible panic seizes the disorganized Midianite camp; it is encumbered with herds and camels as well as with women and children; and in a moment all are rushing hither and thither in darkness, confusion, excitement, and alarm. The dissonant cries, still characteristic of the Arab race, are heard, adding much to the excitement of this terrible experience. The Arab soldiers know not friend from foe, and so, drawing their swords against one another, they flee headlong for life, the vast multitude pouring itself down the descent toward the fords of the Jordan in wildest disorder.⁴ Gideon was keenly alive to the importance of the moment. He followed up his first success with the utmost energy, enthusiasm, and courage. The northern tribes, who had come to his help, were sent in pursuit of the flying foe, whose design was to cross the river at the fords of Bethbarah. Messengers were sent through all the hill country of Ephraim to rouse the men of that great and haughty tribe to cut off the flight of the defeated foe.⁵ Some, however, had already escaped over the ford; but the men of Ephraim reached the lower fords in time to prevent the escape of the great body of the flying host. Although the two greater chiefs had already crossed, the two secondary leaders, the sheiks Oreb and Zeeb, were caught and slain, one at a winepress, afterward known as the Winepress of Zeeb, or the Wolf, and the other at a rock which, in like manner, took its name from the slain chief, and was called the Rock of Oreb, or the Raven.⁶ So great a part of the battle took place about this rock that the battle is called, in Isaiah, "The slaughter of Midian at the Rock of Oreb."⁷ In this connection Isaiah expresses the common opinion as to the greatness of the slaughter by ranking it with that of Egypt at the Red Sea, or the destruction of the host of Sennacherib. The author of the Eighty-third Psalm has this incident in mind when he describes the enemy as driven over the uplands of Gilead like chaff blown from the threshing floors, or like the flames as they leap from tree to tree among the mountains, when in the dry season fire has been placed on the wooded hills.⁸ The Ephraimites dashed onward, passing the Jordan, and soon overtook Gideon and presented to him the severed heads of these fierce sheiks.⁹ They remonstrated with Gideon

¹ Judges vii, 13.² Judges vii, 13, 14.³ Judges vii, 19-21.⁴ Judges vii, 22.⁵ Judges vii, 24.⁶ Judges vii, 25.⁷ Isaiah x, 26.⁸ Psalm lxxxiii, 11, 13, 14.⁹ Judges vii, 25.

for not having earlier called them to participate in the heroic struggle, and their rebuke of him was as characteristic of the pride of their haughty tribe as his gentle and tactful answer was characteristic of his wisdom, forbearance, and self-control.¹ He impressed upon them the fact that their gleanings, in having secured the heads of the slaughtered chiefs, was of more value than the full vintage of the slaughter of unknown multitudes in the previous part of the battle.

Gideon, "faint, yet pursuing," pressed forward with his men.² He had gained two battles, but a third was needed to make the victory overwhelming. He pressed closely in the track of Zebah and Zalmunna, the two greater chiefs of whom we have already spoken. They exercised authority over all the host. The words, "faint, yet pursuing," beautifully describe Gideon's weariness on the one hand, and his energy on the other. These words have found an appropriate place in the religious experiences of many Christians in all ages of the history of the Church. On, on he dashed, notwithstanding his exhaustion! Two halting places in his hasty journey are full of suggestion to all readers of this thrilling narrative—Succoth and Penuel, names which remind us of two great scenes in the earlier life of Jacob.³ Far into the desert he pressed with haste until he reached Karkor, beyond the usual range of the nomadic tribes, and there he overtook the Arabian host, perhaps near Kenath. The remnant of the army thus defeated numbered 15,000;⁴ these he scattered, and the two princes of all the host he captured alive. We now have an account of his triumphant return, and of the fierce vengeance which he inflicted on two cities because of their indifference to the weal of their brethren. The elders of the two towns—Succoth and Penuel—were beaten to death with the thorny branches of the acacia, and the tower of Penuel was thrown down, because they had refused to give food to his men when they were so wearily pursuing the common enemy.⁵

The two sheiks are brought before Gideon on their richly adorned dromedaries, and with other evidences of the state of royal Arabs. These defeated chiefs still possess the brave spirit of the noblest men of the Arab race, and Gideon is moved as he gazes on their present degradation, and remembers their former splendor. He is almost disposed to yield to his tenderer emotions; but when he remembers how his brothers had been slain on Mount Tabor his heart becomes steeled,⁶ and he commands his boy Jether to inflict the decreed punishment on the Arab chiefs.⁷ The boy, however, shrinks from so terrible a task, and Gideon, at the request of Zebah and Zalmunna, with his own hand strikes the deadly blow, and secures their gorgeous robes and glittering ornaments, and the other spoil which their camels had carried.⁸

The memory of this deliverance remained long in Israel. It gave names, as we have seen, to the spring of Harod, to the Rock of Oreb, and to the Winepress of Zeeb. Gideon was modest as he was heroic. His magnificent triumph raised him at once to the highest place in the leadership of the people. They offered him kingly rank for himself and his family,⁹ but the time had not come for a monarchy. Few men were more fit for royal honors and authority than Gideon; his very appearance was kingly. But, instead of accepting the honors offered him, he asked simply for the golden rings taken from the Arab host, that he might dedicate them as an offering unto Jehovah.¹⁰ He combined, as did David in a later day, elements both of sacerdotal and regal authority; but dark superstitions mingled with his religious devotions. The gold thus procured reached the great weight of 1,700 shekels, which was thrown as a grateful gift on his cloak which had been spread upon the ground.¹¹ Strangely enough we find him making, out of this Midianite spoil, a sacred ephod to be used by himself in his house at Ophrah.¹² This ephod was an unauthorized imitation of that of the high priest at Shiloh, and the act of Gideon tended to take from Shiloh its honors as the center of the northern tribes. The ephod became an object of idolatrous worship, leading the people away from the service of

¹ Judges viii, 1-3.² Judges viii, 4.³ Judges viii, 8.⁴ Judges viii, 10.⁵ Judges viii, 13-17.⁶ Judges viii, 19.⁷ Judges viii, 20.⁸ Judges viii, 21.⁹ Judges viii, 22, 23.¹⁰ Judges viii, 24.¹¹ Judges viii, 24-26.¹² Judges viii, 27.

the true God. This is a sad ending of the glorious victory which Gideon had achieved. We all are conscious of the gentleness, sweetness, and nobility of his character; and we also see how these qualities were harmoniously blended with heroic courage, earnest faith, and national loyalty. It has been well said by Dean Stanley, that we have in Gideon "something of the past greatness of Joshua, something of the future grace of David." He was not a perfect man, but, on the whole, an admirable leader of Israel, and we are not surprised to learn that under him "the country was in quietness forty years."

He had many wives, and left seventy-one sons, one of whom proved to be a great curse to Israel. The sad story of Abimelech is in strange contrast with the heroic and romantic events in the life of Gideon; but even this story has lessons of its own to teach the students of this early and troublous period. Abimelech, the son of a slave woman of Shechem,¹ eagerly snatched at the sovereignty which his noble father had declined, and he cruelly put his father's sons to death, with the exception of Jotham, the youngest, in order that he might secure the throne and reign without a rival. The story of Abimelech shows us, among other things, the great danger of polygamy, and the terrible jealousies which inevitably result among the children of numerous wives. Abimelech lent himself most willingly to the jealous hatred of the haughty tribe of Ephraim. He plotted with his mother's family in Shechem that the city should choose him for king. He led them to believe that it was better to be ruled over by one man than by seventy, referring to Gideon's other sons.² He also begged them to remember that he was their "bone and flesh." This only unworthy son inherited the daring of his father, but without his father's sense of justice and self-control. There was, at the time, a tendency toward a monarchical form of government, but his most powerful appeal was to the common element of race between him and the people of Shechem. The people were caught by this appeal; they said, "he is our brother."³ The slaughter of his brothers is the first recorded instance of the horrible practices of oriental monarchs, in slaying all the members of families lest they should interfere with the authority of the ruler. Abimelech retired in triumph to Shechem, his birthplace, the city so famous in the previous history of Israel. Beside the oak under which Joshua addressed the nation in solemn assembly, and where, in later times, the princes of Israel were inaugurated, Abimelech received the title of king.⁴ This was the first time in sacred history that the title was given to any man. It was the critical moment in the history of the entire nation. One of the numerous brothers, Jotham, had escaped when the others were slain. At the time that the people were hailing Abimelech as king,⁵ Jotham, with the practical wisdom and wit of his father and grandfather, appeared on one of the rocky spurs that project from Gerizim into the valley. Standing amid these rocks he was safe from the anger of the multitudes below. He then broke forth in a remarkable address to the astonished people. He uttered a parable, the earliest parable recorded in the history. He spoke, no doubt, in the chanting and lamenting style—the recitative—common to eastern story-tellers. His parable turned on the vegetable world. He described the vine, the cedar, and the thistle as endowed with human instinct and speech, as in the fables of India and Greece. "The trees," he went on to say, "once sought a king, and came in turn to the olive, the fig tree, and the vine, asking each successively to reign over them." Thus he enlarged upon the thought, affirming that the olive declined to leave its fatness and to wave over the trees; so the fig tree, with its broad and green shade, declined; but the worthless thorn eagerly grasped at the proffered dignity and boasted its willingness to rule over its faithful subjects. He then reminded the people that if they chose Abimelech, the worst of all his father's sons, they might find joy in each other. But he suggested the possibility that a fire might come from the worthless thorn bush, and perhaps, also, from themselves, that would destroy both them and him.⁶ He then disappeared, going, it is supposed, to the far-off tribe

¹ Judges viii, 31.² Judges ix, 1-6.³ Judges ix, 3.⁴ Judges ix, 6.⁵ Judges ix, 7.⁶ Judges ix, 7-20.

of Benjamin. This was a strange interruption to the jovial proceedings of the day when the worthless Abimelech was crowned.

Abimelech was the bramble king who undertook to rule. A frightful policy was inaugurated—a policy which was afterward repeated by Jehu in the extermination of the family of Ahab,¹ and by Athaliah in the massacre of the children of Ahaziah,² and a policy that prevailed in Turkey, also, until a recent time. Abimelech left a viceroy, Zebul, in charge of Shechem, while he himself lived in Arumah.³ Abimelech's tyranny was unendurable. Robber bands from Shechem plundered all connected with him, and even tried to capture him. The people became utterly weary of their king, and attempted to throw off his yoke. Gaal, a Canaanite of Shechem, made a treasonable speech at a vine harvest in the temple of Baal, proposing to dethrone Abimelech and himself to rule over the people. Zebul reported this speech to Abimelech, who defeated Gaal and his men and expelled them from the town. On the following day, in another battle, the men of Shechem were overthrown, and Abimelech, after putting to death all whom he could reach, destroyed the town and sowed the ground with salt.⁴ Many who had taken refuge in the temple of Baal were destroyed by fire, Abimelech and his men having piled the fuel about the temple, burning about 1,000 men and women.⁵ The tyrant then went to Thebez determined to destroy its inhabitants in like manner. But while he was pressing close to the tower piling fuel about it to burn it, a woman cast down on him a great millstone, seriously wounding him;⁶ and, disdaining to die in so ignoble a manner, he commanded his armor-bearer to pierce him through with his sword that he might escape the shame of dying by a woman's hand.⁷ With his strange death ended the premature attempt to found a monarchy over a portion of the tribes of Israel.⁸

CHAPTER IX.

JEPHTHAH AND SAMSON.

THE Judges who now followed were men of undistinguished names, and without heroic fame or enduring achievements. The first was Tola, of the tribe of Issachar, and possibly a connection of Abimelech, who secured, in the confusion of the times, the leadership of Israel. It may not be too fanciful to see in the meaning of his name—"a worm"—a suggestion of his insignificant personality and unimportant official service. He dwelt at Shamir, in the mountainous country of Ephraim. We know but little of his deeds, either in peace or war. It is believed, however, that for twenty-three years he defended the northern tribes. Later came Jair, a Gileadite of Manasseh, who was the eighth Judge. He had thirty sons, who were masters of thirty cities, and, like princes, rode on thirty ass colts.⁹ His name means "God will enlighten." The Gileadites, on the east of the river, were enlarging their boundaries. The Midianites had invaded their territory, but had received a decided check by the strong hand of the brave Gideon. Jair seems to have been a vigorous and successful leader. His thirty sons, as has been intimated, maintained something of royal estate. New territories were won during his administration, each territory seems to have had one of his sons as its ruler, and the

¹ II. Kings x, 1-7.

² II. Kings xi, 1.

³ Judges ix, 41.

⁴ Judges ix, 45.

⁵ Judges ix, 49.

⁶ Judges ix, 53.

⁷ Judges ix, 54.

⁸ For facts in detail, see Judges ix, 46-57. See, also, for fine descriptions, Stanley, "Jewish Church," I, Lecture XV; and Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," II, xvi. See Smith's and other Bible Dictionaries under the names discussed. Also, see on Gideon and Abimelech, "The Bible for Learners," by Oort, Hooykaas and Kuenen, I, xvii and xviii.

⁹ Judges x, 3-5.

towns were known as "Jair's Villages"—Havoth-Jair. But comparatively little is known of his judgeship.

But a new invasion of the territory was made by the Philistines who attacked the western border; and the Ammonites, a more formidable enemy, gained victories over the tribes beyond the Jordan, and also challenged the combined forces of Ephraim, Judah, and Benjamin. The present was dark, and the future was growing darker. The patriarchal government had now lasted 300 years, but disaster and anarchy were everywhere dominant. The national spirit had largely died out, and the national faith was constantly decreasing. On the north the idols of Syria replaced the worship of Jehovah, or divided the veneration of the people. On the southwest the gods of the Philistines, and on the east those of Moab and Ammon, had numerous devotees.¹ There was no strength, no union, no courage, and but little hope among the tribes. All felt the need of a monarchy.² The enemies of Israel were under the authority of kings; and these enemies had grown strong while Israel had become weak. The Ammonites, whom the forefathers of the people had crushed, had now, as we have seen, so increased in number and power as to become formidable foes. The country on both sides of the Jordan was thus harassed by enemies seeking plunder and inflicting destruction.

God now raised up a deliverer after this fifth conquest by the Ammonites and their allies, who for eighteen years had held the country east of the Jordan in subjection. Once more the people turned in penitence unto Jehovah; once more he heard their prayer and sent them deliverance. The deliverer at this time was Jephthah, an illegitimate son of a Gileadite of the tribe of Manasseh. A rugged chieftain, a reckless freebooter, but a daring deliverer was Jephthah. His strange history and contradictory character are vivid illustrations of these troublous times. His brothers had driven him from home, and he then lived a marauding life on the borders of the tribe, at the head of such roving bands of reckless men as could be easily collected in that unsettled period. But when his kindred were groaning under foreign oppression, they looked to this lawless compatriot for deliverance. They sent for him and made him their leader; and he did not disappoint their hopes. His fame had spread over Gilead and his haughty soul deeply felt the humiliation of his expulsion. He consented to come only on the solemn oath sworn at the Sanctuary at Mizpeh that, if he drove out their enemies, he should be their ruler for life. He at once sent an embassy to the king of the Ammonites remonstrating with him on his unprovoked aggressions; but this king demanded the formal surrender of the transjordanic provinces. Jephthah saw that negotiations with this king would be fruitless; the spirit of the Lord, as a spirit of strength and bravery, came upon him; and he at once prepared for war, and burst on the enemy with such fury that he drove them before him, capturing twenty towns from Aroer on the Arnon to Minnith and to Abel Keranim. His creed was strangely made up of correct notions of God, mixed with the dark rites of heathenism borrowed from the worship of Chemosh. While the prospect of battle was before him, he vowed to devote, as a burnt offering to God, whomsoever should come out of his household to meet him on his triumphant return.³ He doubtless was familiar with the offering of human sacrifices to Chemosh; possibly, also, he expected that some slave, or, perhaps, an animal would be the first to greet him on his return. He gained, as we have noticed, a superb victory over the Ammonites, and the news of his victory preceded his own return to Mizpeh; but, instead of being met by an animal, or by a slave, his only daughter, filled with pride because of her father's splendid conquest, came forth dancing in the gladness of her heart, and with instruments of music to welcome him home. The sight was enough to freeze his blood in his veins, and to stop his heart in its beating. What can it mean? The joyous music ceases. The maiden

¹ Judges x, 6. ² See Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," II, p. 502.

³ Judges xi, 31. The word "whatsoever" in the Authorized Version may be rendered, as given in the text, "whomsoever," as it is without distinction of gender.

draws near in silence. The hero of the hour is the picture of despair. The wretched man rent his clothes in agony, but the noble young woman insisted that he should not disregard his solemn vow. Her life is the awful price of his great victory. The bearing of both is equally striking in this sad calamity in their family life. Must she die—she, his only child, and so young and beautiful? The greatness of the sacrifice he must make almost crushes his life; but the brave-spirited maiden rises with a noble grandeur above her own sorrow, and above her father's grief, with her mistaken conception of God and duty; she glories in her father's and her nation's victory, even though it be at the price of her own beautiful young life. She is calm while rough-cheeked warriors turn pale and quiver with sorrow. She merely asks for a short period to be given her, which she will spend in the lonely depths of the mountains bewailing her sad fate—bewailing, as did the Antigone of Sophocles, in her special grief, that she must die without the hope of becoming a bride or mother in Israel. No doubt all eyes were turned in admiration on the heroic girl. Then came the last sad scene, for “he did with her according to his vow.”

We need not be surprised that this story lingered long in the memory of all the people, and that for generations after the maidens, in sympathy with the self-sacrificing spirit of Jephthah's daughter, bewailed her fate. The story brings us into the atmosphere of classical times; there is often a close likeness between the Hebrew story and the heathen nations of nearly contemporaneous days. It was an age of rash vows. This truth is illustrated in the vow of the whole nation against the tribe of Benjamin; in the vow of King Saul which nearly cost Jonathan his life. Jonathan would have been slain but for the interposition of the army; but here there is no mention of interposition on behalf of this heroic but misguided maiden. It seems almost certain that the darker view of this tragedy is the correct one. Jephthah lived in Gilead, and Gilead adjoined the countries of Moab and Ammon, where human sacrifices were not uncommon. This was the first and last human sacrifice offered in a mistaken interpretation of the will of Jehovah. Human sacrifices were not permitted in Israel, and this immolation could not have been offered on the altar at the tabernacle. It is not, therefore, surprising that many learned writers have labored to relieve the sacred history of this sad story. They have supposed that Jephthah's daughter was consecrated to some form of religious service, and was devoted to perpetual virginity. But such forced interpretations do not harmonize with the reckless spirit of a fierce freebooter and ignorant worshiper of God as was Jephthah. We must, also, take into consideration the times of anarchy, of ignorance, and of cruel superstition in which he lived. Indeed, serious objections can rightly be made to the idea that this maiden was dedicated to any form of religious worship. Vows of celibacy were then entirely unknown among the Hebrews; they belong to a later period, and to a different condition of society. The maiden could not be dedicated to the services of the high priest, for he and the Ark were then at Shiloh in the territory of Ephraim, and Jephthah was at deadly war with that tribe, which, with its usual haughty and overbearing character, had resented his failure to summon it to leadership in the war. Two months after his victory over the Ammonites he fulfilled his terrible vow. Crowned with flowers, the brave girl was led with music and song to the altar. If the vow meant perpetual virginity, there was no need that the maiden should ask for two months of preparation; she would have all her life in which to bewail her maidenhood. Nothing seems more certain than that she was offered as a sacrifice. The act was the result of a false principle and a foolish vow. It was an act hateful to God; and, but for a natural repugnance to associate so terrible an act with a man whom God in certain ways honored, probably no commentator on the narrative would ever have doubted the reality of the horrible sacrifice.¹

¹ Jonathan the paraphrast, Rashi and Josephus, Origen, Chrysostom, *et al.*, are quoted in Smith's "Bible Dictionary," as taking the view of a real sacrifice. Joseph Kimchi, *et al.*, the other view. See other authorities quoted by Smith.



THE DAUGHTER OF JEPHTHAH.

Jephthah's judgeship thus marks the first outbreak of civil war in Israel. Unlike Gideon, Jephthah had no soft words, to turn away the wrath of the haughty Ephraimites. Blows followed hot words. At the ford of the Jordan, Jephthah defeated the Ephraimites, distinguishing them by their peculiar pronunciation of Shibboleth, meaning "water streams," or "harvests," which they pronounced as if it were spelled Sibboleth. All who thus betrayed themselves, even to the number of 42,000, he put to death without mercy. For six years he ruled as Judge, conquering all his foes and being the undisputed lord of Israel. In Gideon we have the highest type of ruler of the time; in Jephthah and Samson the lowest. The Bible does not commend the cruel and superstitious acts of Jephthah. In the Epistle to the Hebrews he is mentioned among the heroes of faith;¹ but commendation for one worthy quality does not imply indorsement of his entire character and career. He was succeeded by a number of leaders of comparatively little importance—men of whose actions the record is silent. They were Ibzan of Bethlehem, who judged seven years; Elon of Zebulun, ten years; and Abdon, an Ephraimite, who ruled eight years.

Another remarkable character comes before us for consideration at this point in the history of Israel. Like Jephthah, Samson was a man of mingled good and evil: he was a reflection of the contradictory elements of the time in which he lived. A new enemy to Israel had arisen, and a new oppression from that enemy was now experienced. In her eastern territory Israel had sunk to a low point; in her southwestern dominion an equally humiliating condition was reached. The new enemy that had now arisen was destined to give great trouble in the future, and had given some trouble in the past. The Philistines on the southern border were among the most dangerous and implacable foes of Israel. They were not disposed to retire within their own borders, as some of the other enemies of Israel had done. They came before us as early as the distant days of Abraham; they had also formed a confederacy of five cities in the Maritime Plain in the time of Joshua; but now they had risen to remarkable power and were impelled by corresponding ambition. In the later period of the judges these newcomers pressed very heavily on the small tribe of Dan, and so out of this tribe came the deliverer. Gaza and Askelon were in their power, and they pushed their possessions to the territory of Dan. The word Philistine, as already pointed out, is supposed to mean "strangers or immigrants," and it is barely possible that it stands related to the name Pelasgi. They were sometimes called in Scripture Cherethites,² which by some is supposed to be derived from the island of Crete, which may have been their original home. Others think that they went from Cyprus to Palestine, the name of that island having been akin to the word Caphtor, which place is given in Genesis as their former home. Successive arrivals came into the land in the time of Rameses III., who reigned about the time of Jephthah.³ Rameses III. had driven back an attack on Egypt by the Philistines and other tribes; but many of the invaders entered, as it is supposed, the service of their conquerors as mercenary soldiers. But the Philistine part of these invading hordes obtained permission to settle among their brethren of earlier immigration in the southwest of Palestine; in that position they were to guard Egypt from attack on the north.⁴ This territory commanded the pass to the mountain home of Israel. The five cities of Philistia—Gaza, Askelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath—have come before us already in this history; but now they appear to be dangerously strong. Several rulers of Egypt kept garrisons of Semitic mercenaries at Gaza. The Avites, dwellers in the lowlands, had adopted the language and religion of their fierce masters. In Joshua's day the cities of the Philistines were not included among the cities held by Judah, although that territory was given to Judah.⁵ Israel did not wish to arouse Egypt, nor to test the strength of the Philistines. As a result, the Anakim—meaning the "long-necked"—and the Amorites found a refuge in these cities, whose military chiefs were called

¹ Hebrews xi, 32.² Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," II, p. 506.³ *Ibid.*, 507.⁴ Maspero, to whom Geikie refers.⁵ Joshua xv, 12.

kings. These five cities formed a confederation; they united in their religious rites, and in their frequent wars. They had a strong force of chariots and also archers of proverbial skill.¹ They were distinguished for the strength and variety of their armor. The panoply of the Philistine warrior gives a remarkable list of weapons, offensive and defensive.² The Philistines were an uncircumcised people. They stood on a low level of civilization. They were intellectually stupid, and soon became the victims, when they were not the laughingstock, of men of the humor of Samson and of the mental brilliancy of David. Their chief deity was the fish-god Dagon. Against this fierce foe Israel was to wage war for the next 100 years, and at this critical moment a child was born, who, under the providence of God, was to rouse his countrymen, to destroy his foes, and to make for himself an immortal name. It is not too much to say that the birth of Samson marks the dawn of a new era, which continued until it found its superb culmination in the brilliant reign of the immortal David. This era belongs partly to the gloomy age which it closed, and partly to the glorious period which it opened.

The word Samson has been explained to mean, "little sun" or "sunlike";³ but according to some authorities it means "strong," and according to still others it means "awful," in the sense of exciting astonishment or awe, either in the minds of the father and mother who looked upon the angel who announced Samson's birth, or in the minds of those who saw his feats of heroic valor. As we have frequently had occasion to remark, God always has the man in training for the hour that has come or is coming. Samson was the son of Manoah of the tribe of Dan, and of the town of Zorah on the border of Judea. He was a child of miraculous birth. He served his nation as a judge, filling the office for twenty years. He was also a Nazarite, and was endowed with special power by the spirit of the Lord.⁴ As a result of this clothing of the spirit, and the other elements entering into his life, he became a man of prodigious bodily strength. This strength, however, he often displayed in the wildest feats of personal daring, and sometimes in amusements which involved him in perils from which only his remarkable power was able to extricate him. His opposition to the common foe was not displayed in consistent methods of defense; for he never appears at the head of an army, but his campaigns are the result of his remarkable strength and his strangely constituted nature. He has often been compared to the Grecian Hercules, and sometimes to the Arabian Antar. We shall see that a broad vein of humor runs through all the early exploits of this stout-hearted warrior; we shall, also, see that foolish and often sinful love of women, as well as the slaying of his Philistine foes out of mere recklessness, constantly marked his life. He was in many respects the most remarkable man in all this troublous history; but the life that began in miracles ended in fierce tragedy. As a Nazarite he was dedicated by vow to the Lord, and so allowed his hair to grow, and so, also, lived a life of rigid abstinence. We have in his case the first appearance in this history of the ascetic vows which finally found a permanent manifestation in the religion of Israelites, as in all the religions of the East and of the West, and eventually in Christianity, Mohammedanism, and other faiths of more modern times. Mohammedanism is still Nazaritish in its abstinence from wine, and even to this moment some of the Arabian tribes never permit their hair to be shorn; and the hierarchy of the Greek Church cherish their long beards as evidences of their priestly character. We have already seen that at the time of Samson's birth the Philistines were the masters of the Israelites; and Judah and Dan were subject to their dominion during the whole period of Samson's judgeship. His term of office must, therefore, be included in the forty years of the Philistine possession. He is distinctly spoken of in Scripture as especially endowed by the spirit of the Lord; frequent mention is

¹ See authorities quoted by Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," II, p. 508.

² I. Samuel xvii, 5-7.

³ See discussion in "The Bible for Learners," by Oort, Hooykaas and Kuenen, pp. 411 to 414, as to whether the name means "Sun-god" and is a survival of sun-worship, a worship prevalent among the Canaanites and all nations issuing from barbarism, and a worship suggested by such a name as Beth-shemesh.

⁴ Judges xiii, 25, xiv, 6, xv, 14, xvi, 20-28.

made, in different connections, of the general fact that at times "the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax burned with fire." The other side of the truth is brought out by the statement that when his locks were shorn, and his strength was taken from him, "he wist not that the Lord was departed from him." The phrase "the spirit of the Lord came upon him," is applied to Othniel and Gideon as well as to Samson; but to him there was special supernatural strength in connection with his keeping of the Nazarite vow. His whole character is without a parallel in Scripture. His history was intended to teach the Israelites, among other things, that their only hope of possessing national strength was in their separation from idolatry and in their entire consecration to Jehovah. He only could give them power over their foes and unity among themselves.

When Samson was grown up to young manhood, his first demand was that he might marry a Philistine woman. This woman he had seen at Timnath and at once, with a strange mingling of innocent affection and inordinate desire, he fell in love with her. His parents reluctantly gave their consent to his desire, thinking that he intended some form of opposition to the common oppressor. On his way to Timnath a young lion roared at him, and immediately Samson displayed his remarkable strength by tearing the lion asunder with his hand. When next he passed that way he discovered that the bees had made a hive in the carcass of the lion, and with that tendency to drollery which was characteristic of this great and reckless man, he made a riddle from this curious occurrence for the thirty youths who attended him at his bridal feast. If his friends discovered his riddle he was to pay each a sheet and a garment; if they failed they were to pay the same to him. The riddle has become familiar through all the generations. It is quaint in itself, and is striking in its expression, "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." As a result of the urgency of his wife he betrayed the secret to her, and she in turn gave it to her countrymen. After rebuking his companions, he immediately slew thirty Philistines. His reckless disposition showed itself again when, after spending some time at home, he revisited his wife and found her married to another man. This time he secured revenge by catching 300 jackals, tying them tail to tail, placing a firebrand between them and turning them loose into the dry cornfields of the Philistines. Their cruelty was shown in burning his wife and her father, thus putting both of them to death. Samson's wrath was gratified, as he fell upon them, slaying them in great numbers, and finally taking refuge in a rock called Etam. The Philistines were assembled in a pass and into their hands the tribe of Judah, utterly discouraged and disheartened by the oppression so long endured, cowardly determined to surrender Samson. With this thought in mind he was seized, bound, and brought to the Philistine camp. Once more the spirit of the Lord came upon him in mighty power. In his gigantic strength he burst the bonds that bound him as if they had been ropes of flax or sand. He then seized the jawbone of an ass, which chanced to be within reach, and, rushing upon the hated foe, with this unique weapon he slew 1,000 men. The ground was suddenly cloven at his feet, and a spring of water flowed forth to satisfy his thirst in his exhaustion. It is likely that the water was found in the pass, which probably bore a resemblance to the jawbone of an ass, and, therefore, the supposed miracle of the springing up of the water from the jawbone in his hand is a mere misinterpretation of the narrative. When the spirit of God came upon him in this remarkable way his strength was so great that he could carry away the gate of a city, and, as we shall see, throw down the pillars of the house of Dagon. We next find him visiting a woman of disrepute in Gaza. This city was the capital of his fierce enemy, the Philistines. His going was an evidence of recklessness and of uncontrolled desire which we rightly criticise as utterly unbecoming a Judge in Israel and an instrument in the hand of God. His enemies were quick to learn of his presence. They promptly closed their gates, and silently waited for the opportunity to secure their strange, and now apparently helpless, foe.



BIDA.

GAZA.

But at midnight Samson arose, lifted the gates from their hinges, swung them upon his shoulders, and carried them, as if they had been the playthings of a child, to a hill nearly twenty miles distant.

We find him again falling into the more dangerous snares of Delilah. This was a fatal step for the man who should have been God's instrument and the deliverer of Israel. Immediately the Philistine chiefs bribed her, that she might, by all her seductive arts, learn the secret of his supernatural power. Once he eluded her fascinations; twice he avoided the trap laid for his feet; but with the third trial of her artful influence he permitted himself to be betrayed into her power. He frankly told her that his secret lay in the maintenance of his Nazarite vow, part of which vow was that his hair was never to be shorn. Then he foolishly and wickedly slept in the lap of sin, and in his guilty sleep she cut his hair, and robbed him of his great strength. Immediately the Philistines seized him, cruelly put out his eyes, firmly bound him with brazen fetters, and humiliatingly made him grind at the mill. We see in this case the blinding, binding, and grinding power of sin. Wonderfully did the great Milton seize upon this part of Samson's history, and grandly does he dress the ending of this foolish, brave, sinful, and contradictory life, in the nobility of heroic patience and patriotic resignation. The cruel Philistines, in their untamed joy, insulted him in the prison, and, like the fierce savages they were, made a public exhibition of their long-dreaded but now defeated foe. They obliged him to contribute to their amusement in a sort of primitive theater. In this arena they placed their illustrious captive. The roof formed the seating place of the structure. Great crowds of spectators gazed with barbarous delight on the humiliation of Samson. He asked that he might lean upon the pillars which supported the house of Dagon; his request was granted. He seized these two pillars; once more the power of the Omnipotent One came upon him; he leaned forward with his limitless force; the pillars yielded to his prodigious strength, and in a moment more the whole building fell, burying Samson and all his enemies in a common and terrific ruin. Thus wretchedly perished the unique man, raised up by God for the deliverance of Israel from its Philistine foes.

It is easy to trace points of similarity between this story and that told by Herodotus of the captivity of Hercules in Egypt; and they are numerous and marked. It is not impossible that Phœnician traders carried to Egypt, and other countries, especially Greece and Italy, stories of the great Hebrew hero. These stories would take the color of the national characteristics and the local tastes of the various countries in which they were repeated. Samson is a rare example of human strength and human weakness. His character partakes both of the elements of nobility and of weakness and wickedness, characteristic of that rude time. At one moment he is swept by wild and ungovernable passions; at another we see him in a noble indignation and true patriotism worthy of a hero and a Judge. But while we discover these coincidences between Samson and Hercules, we still see that, while the story of Hercules is allegorical that of Samson is historical. The Word of God nowhere gives unqualified indorsement of this strangely contradictory life. The writer of the Epistles to the Hebrews mentions Deborah, Barak, Jephthah, and Samson, but not to indorse all the acts of the semi-barbarous lives of the latter two. The Word of God nowhere indorses evil; God often uses men not wholly good for the carrying out of his divine plans. Samson is, in many respects, the most remarkable man in all this history. In him weakness and strength, playful humor and tragical suffering were strangely combined. His ending is a solemn warning to all men against the dangers of fleshly indulgence. The voice of Delilah may be soft and sweet; but it only woos that the Philistine may destroy her victims. The pleasures of sin, at longest, are but for a season. Sin smites while it smiles, and leads evermore to the dungeon of blindness, to the bonds of captivity, to the grinding of degradation, and to tragical destruction. We give Samson credit for delivering Israel; we recognize his faith as we do that of Gideon, Barak, and Jephthah.

He weakened the power of the Philistines and poured, at the last, utter contempt on Dagon, their god. We may say, as we close the vivid and romantic history of the son of Manoah, in the words of the immortal Milton,

“ Samson hath quit himself
Like Samson, and heroically hath finished
A life heroic.”

The Book of Judges properly closes with the sixteenth chapter. There are, however, two appendices which give us an account of the case of two Levites. What follows, beginning with the seventeenth chapter, is probably an account of what occurred long before the events recorded in earlier portions of the book. A true chronological place for these chapters would



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seem to be between the second and third chapters. The history found in chapters xvii and xviii is obviously closely related to chapter i, 34. There the reasons of the immigration of a part of the tribe of Dan to the northern quarter of Canaan are stated; for the Ammonites forced the children of Dan into the mountain, and would not suffer them to come down to the valley. The result was that the children of Dan were greatly straitened in this only available place, which was quite inadequate to the wants of a community of 64,000 fighting men. Unlike Simeon and Benjamin, Dan had no sharply defined tribal limits. It was forced, therefore, to lead, for a considerable time, a camp life, being crowded together in a spot long known

as the Camp of Dan,¹ which was near Kirjath-jearim, the Forest City,² a few miles west of Jerusalem. Desiring a more enlarged inheritance, for their condition was intolerable in their limited possessions, 600 men, with their wives and children, wandered to the foot of Mount Hermon, overcame some Sidonians living there, took possession of their fertile land, and changed the name of the conquered town from Laish to Dan. The detached Canaanite communities in the north became an easy prey to the marauding Danites. In connection with their possession of this territory the events related in these chapters took place. Idolatry was established in that tribe; and the sad story of the Levite's concubine and the war with Benjamin occupy the remaining portion of the appendix. It is expressly stated that these incidents occurred while Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, was high priest.³ The only connection of these events with the history of Samson is that this portion also is concerned with the tribe of Dan. It is certainly one of the darkest and saddest narratives to be found in the Bible. It brings the blush to the cheek and saddens the heart with genuine sorrow. It is very certain that the events took place when there was no king in Israel, and when every man did that which was right in his own sight.⁴ The history of these two Levites abounds in romantic incidents. The first part of the history may be read aloud; but the second is to be read in secret—perhaps it is scarcely to be read even in secret.⁵ But it is a history which ought to be fully comprehended. We see here that terrible vengeance was dealt out to those who inflicted a scandal upon Israel. It is not necessary to go into details in these chapters of surprises, contradictions, and humiliations. How strange it is that a layman should consecrate a priest, as did Micah! Idolatry is here seen to have its pathetic side. Man's attempts to make gods and altars illustrate his deep need of the true God and the only method of approaching his august presence; the soul cries out for the divine-human Priest. We see here that a converted thief elaborated a religious system.⁶ We have here, as one of the greatest surprises of this strangely contradictory history, an idolater appealing to the true God.⁷ It is not surprising that anarchy becomes dominant. When men enthrone wrong they experience grief; when they yield to sin they experience sorrow, for sin and punishment are inseparably associated. They are related to each other as surely as are shadow and substance. One gladly turns away from the sad details of this sinful history; and yet even here we can see how God can bring light out of darkness and good from evil.

¹ Judges xiii, 25, xviii, 12.

² Joshua xix, 47; also, Judges xviii, 27-29.

³ Judges xx, 28.

⁴ Judges xvii, 6.

⁵ Parker, "People's Bible," VI, p. 125.

⁶ Parker, "People's Bible," VI, p. 125.

⁷ Judges xvii, 13.

CHAPTER X.

THE BOOK OF RUTH.

FROM the wild and stormy scenes with which the Book of Judges closed, we pass into the idyllic peace, feminine gentleness, and domestic piety with which the Book of Ruth abounds. This book gives us the bright and gentle side of the dark and rude picture presented in the Book of Judges. The story leads us into the primitive simplicity and the delightful harmony which were so strikingly absent during the preceding generations. It introduces us into a quiet, green, and gentle corner of history. The starting point of the story is Bethlehem, and we are glad to pronounce the name of the town, which means "House of Bread," and which is prophetic of the life of Christ and his disciples. We are glad to part from stories of wickedness and cruelty and listen with quiet and comforted hearts to this sweet pastoral tale. We are grateful that the noise of strife and confusion, the hoarse shouts of victors and the grating groans of the vanquished, have ceased; and for a time we wander in the quiet corn-fields and hear the salutations between the reapers and their master, "Jehovah be with you," "Jehovah bless thee."

This story presents to us the brighter side of Hebrew life. It shows us how the Hebrew faith tended to lighten the burden of poverty and to comfort the heart of sorrow. It introduces us to the simple customs and affectionate duties of that ancient time; indeed, it reminds us of customs which were becoming obsolete when it was written, but which were "the manners of Israel in former times." It is a sort of appendix to the Book of Judges; and the effect produced by the Book of Ruth is all the more marked because of the sharp contrast between them. From the hideous deeds of the men of Gibeon we turn with joy to the beautiful devotion of Ruth the Moabite, and from the rugged uplands where roamed invaders and defenders, we turn with gratitude to the sunny plains of Bethlehem. The book also contains the genealogy of David from the time of the patriarchs onward to Jesse the Bethlehemite. This genealogy is of great value, especially in connection with that of the Messiah; it is also a guide to the chronology of the period. Salmon, the husband of Rahab, father of Boaz, and the first proprietor of Bethlehem, is the grandfather of Obed, who is the grandfather of David. This genealogy may have been one of the sources from which the evangelists drew their materials. We know that the book is also typical in its character, in its connection with the lineage of the Messiah. In the marriage of Ruth the Moabite with Boaz, a man of the tribe of Judah, we have a prophecy of the union of Jew and Gentile. In the commingling of nationalities among the ancestors of Christ, we have an idea of the far-reaching and world-including nature of the kingdom which he came to establish. Some persons, doubtless, are startled at the thought that Gentile and, as we might say, tainted blood is found among the ancestors of Christ; but there was a divine purpose in having in that list the sinful Tamar, the harlot Rahab, and the virtuous Ruth.

It seems fitting that before taking up the story in its detail, and learning the lessons which it so fully and beautifully teaches, we should say something about the book as a whole. The authorship of the book is entirely unknown; probably it never will be certainly known. Some have attributed it to Samuel, some to the writer of the Book of Joshua, others to Hezekiah, others to Ezra, and still others believe that David himself was the author.¹ One reason which

¹ Dr. James Morison in Introduction to Ruth in "Pulpit Commentary."

leads to the selection of David is that it is supposed that any other writer would, in the genealogical table at the close, have given royal honor to David's name. It is useless to hazard conjectures as to the authorship of the volume. We may be sure, however, that the striking and peaceful incidents of this story were preserved in the family of David, and must often have been narrated in his family circle. In the English Bible the book is found in a position according with that of the Septuagint, being inserted between Judges and First Samuel. This is a natural position; the book is, in a sense, a supplement to Judges and an introduction to Samuel. It is thus found between the ermine of the Judges and the crowns of the Kings, and forms an appropriate link between the period of the Judges and that of the monarchy. In the Hebrew Bible Ruth is placed between the Song of Songs and the Book of Lamentations. Ruth there appears with joy on the one hand and grief on the other. In the Vulgate the book appears, as in the Septuagint, at the close of the Book of Judges. It thus appears as a sort of biographical addition to that book; several of the Fathers formed one book of the two.

The date of the composition it is impossible to determine. It seems, however, to have been written after the birth of David,¹ and perhaps during his reign. The genealogy at the close of the book implies that he had attained, at that time, to a considerable degree of historic importance—an importance which suggests that he had at least partially completed his career as warrior, king, and prophet. In the opening sentence the writer comes down beyond the age of the Judges; for he speaks of what occurred “in the days when the Judges ruled.” It seems certain, therefore, that these days were over and that another era had begun. He also, as we have already remarked, calls attention to customs which in former time obtained in Israel regarding the transfer of property and the surrender of rights.² A considerable period must, therefore, have elapsed between the time when these events occurred and the date of their record. The genealogy, at the close, is also carried down to the time of David.³ It is true that this statement may have been added at a later time, but until that fact is ascertained we are warranted in giving the natural interpretation to the words recorded. Some writers have pointed out words and grammatical forms in the book which they affirm belong to compositions of a later period; some would even bring it down to the time of the Chaldaic period of Jewish history; but arguments based on verbal examples of this sort are necessarily of doubtful authority. The number of peculiar words and phrases found in the book is not large; they are also, certainly for the most part, the language not of the author, but of the persons who are presented as the speakers. They may, therefore, be the colloquial expressions of an earlier period—the period perhaps of the Judges.⁴ We are safe in saying that no arguments based upon the language of the book can carry with them any great weight as to the time of its composition.⁵ The earlier origin of the book, it has been pointed out, is suggested by the intermarrying between Hebrews and foreigners without arousing the repugnance which would have been felt at a later day; and no apology is offered for the marriage with Ruth, which does not seem to have given offense. In the time of Ezra and Nehemiah such alliances would have called forth indignation and protest.

We may conclude, therefore, that the book belongs to the time of David. We know that that was a literary period in the history of the Hebrew people, and that David himself was as truly a poet as he was a soldier or a king. Men of like tastes would naturally gather about his palace and throne; for he was a man of broad sympathies and of generous impulses. This tender and beautiful incident in the life of his ancestors would doubtless arrest his thought and evoke his admiration. All the details would be familiar to him and to his household. But few

¹ Ruth iv, 17.

² Ruth iv, 7.

³ Ruth iv, 22.

⁴ Ewald thinks that we occasionally have an echo from the Book of Job, *Geschichte*, Vol. I, page 155. But he makes Job belong to a comparatively late period. He would put Ruth in the exilic epoch, and Bertholdt inclines to the post-exilic.

⁵ See excellent discussion in *Introduction* in “*Pulpit Commentary*,” page 11. There is often, in discussing such questions, a vast amount of learned childishness.

generations had passed since the events occurred, and every step in the connection between generation and generation he could clearly trace; even the words which formed the substance of conversation between Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz could readily be remembered, and would be frequently repeated. The intense Hebrew feeling of the time of Ezra and Nehemiah was such that a book like this could not then have been written; but David and the men of his time were broader in their sympathies, and were more ready to appreciate God's relationship with all the peoples of the earth. David would not be ashamed of this Moabitish strain in the national blood; he would not forget that, during a most critical period in his own history, he enjoyed the friendship of the king of Moab. When he fled for his life from the presence of Saul and took refuge in the cave of Adullam, he brought his father and mother before the king of Moab and they remained under his protection while David was in the hold. This period seems as appropriate as any that can be named for the composition of this beautiful story of the ancestors of David, and of him who was both David's son and David's Lord. Had the book been written in an earlier time, the custom of pulling off the shoe in connection with the making of contracts, which was common in the days of Boaz, would not have been spoken of as having passed away; and we can hardly believe that it was written at a time much later than that of David, for the incidents are narrated with so much particularity that we cannot believe that many generations had passed since their occurrence. It is noticeable, also, that the genealogy at the close of the fourth chapter stops when it has been carried down to King David.

The object which the writer has in view has been differently interpreted by different students. Some have supposed that his chief purpose was to emphasize the authority of the levirate law which required a brother-in-law to marry his brother's widow. But it must be borne in mind that that duty is assumed and is mentioned only as an incident in the history; and it is also to be borne in mind that Boaz was not the brother of Ruth's husband, but only a distant kinsman. Neither can we suppose that the object was merely to trace the genealogy of David's family. We may well believe that that object was not forgotten in the preparation of the book; but the aim of the writer is deeper than either of these purposes would suggest. Because of the differences of opinion as to the author's purpose, different titles have been given to the exposition of the book. Some have said that its main purpose was to set forth the rich reward which piety, sooner or later, will secure. The book sets forth the earnest theocratic spirit which is found in the conduct of all the actors in this archaic and idyllic story. We may believe that the writer was influenced, in no small degree, simply by the charm of Ruth's character, by her devotion to her mother-in-law, and by the reward which, in the providence of God, she secured. She had gone to an unknown people; she had taken refuge under the protecting wings of their God, and she found him able and willing to grant her present blessings and to permit her to have a place among the ancestors of David's house. There was a charm merely in the delineation of such a character; and we may well believe that the writer was under the influence of that charm. There is a sense in which we must judge Bible literature simply as literature. We may, therefore, well suppose that in the spirit of literary enthusiasm, in part, at least, the writer began, continued, and completed his task. But he teaches at the same time lessons of trust in God, and gives proof of the reward of religious devotion. The theology of Ruth is simple and beautiful. She had come to Bethlehem to put her trust "under the wings of the God of Israel"; she believed that he was the rewarder of them that diligently sought him. Her love to Naomi, her mother-in-law, is worthy of all praise. Christ was not only the son of David and the son of Boaz, but also the son of Ruth the Moabitess. In ascending the genealogical ladder to Abraham, we see that there were other Gentile rounds therein, showing the relation of the patriarch with outlying families of the earth, and foreshadowing the glory of Christ who was to be the Kinsman of men of all nations and times.¹ This writer does not apologize for finding

¹ Introduction to Ruth in "Pulpit Commentary," p. 6.

commendable qualities among the Gentiles. There is in the book a beautiful absence of Hebrew bigotry, so often elsewhere found, but so conspicuously wanting in the spirit and form of the Book of Ruth.

The book, as literature, is worthy of high commendation. It is partly history, and partly biography. It might be more correctly described as a biographical episode in a continuous history. It abounds in matchlessly interesting touches of oriental life; and they are described with the striking vividness expressive of reality. In the vicinity of Bethlehem, at the season of the year described in this volume, women and children may still be seen gleaning after the reapers. All the particulars given regarding the fields, the threshing floor, the gleaning, the parched corn, the vinegar in which the eaters dipped their morsel, which was sour wine mingled with oil, are still a part of the local features of the country. It is still the custom for even a rich proprietor to sleep at night as Boaz is described as sleeping. The danger from robbers, and the unreliability of hired laborers necessitate the personal watchfulness of such a proprietor as was Boaz. Husband, wife, and family often encamp at the threshing floor until the harvest is over. The veil in which Ruth carried home the six measures of barley was a mantle as well as a veil, and was such as Eastern women wear to this day. Dr. Thompson tells us that he often has seen this veil used "for just such service as that to which Ruth applied hers." It is rare that barley is used for food in Syria except by the very poor; the fact, therefore, of Ruth and Naomi being glad to secure barley is in perfect harmony with the great poverty ascribed to them in the narrative. The scene at the gate is in thorough accord with oriental customs; for the gate was the place of concourse where the people meet to hear the news, to dispense justice, and to perform all acts which pertain to the good of the community. The story has on its face every evidence of truthfulness; one cannot help feeling, as he reads the book, that it is a narrative of facts. Its perfect simplicity, its crystalline clearness, and its unconscious sweetness all give evidence of its perfect reality. Had it not been true history, its untruthfulness could readily have been discovered and proclaimed. The events narrated are of so deliberate and sensitive a character that their falsity would have been inevitably revealed, were they false. The existence of the connection of David's family with Moab must have been known in his time; and, as we have suggested, this Moabitish connection must often have been the subject of comment in the royal palace. The writer of this book, therefore, must have felt the necessity of conforming the narrative to the absolute facts in the case. The introduction of purely imaginary events would have been discovered and quickly denounced by the supporters of the royal family. We have here no historical fiction; no "family picture painted on a canvas of romance."¹ While any literature is read and loved, the story of Ruth will maintain its place among the idyls of this ancient time and of this remote land. It will sing its song of family life and love in all the ages to come; it will tell the story of the widow's grief, of a bride's gladness, and of a master's sweet joyousness. But the book is far more than an interesting and touching story. It abounds in spiritual instruction. It suggests the Gospel concerning him who is the Kinsman and Redeemer of all men who will trust him, both Jew and Gentile, and it is sweetly prophetic of the union between the Church, as the Holy Bride, and Jesus Christ, the descendant of Boaz, as the divine Bridegroom.

We are now prepared to look at the story itself, and to learn the lessons which it distinctly teaches. The time of its occurrence was during that stormy period when the Judges ruled in the land. It was, also, a time when a famine prevailed over great districts, and the people were reduced to great suffering; there was "cleanness of teeth," in many parts of the land. This famine penetrated even to the most fertile districts. If Bethlehem, "House of Bread," suffered, then less fruitful sections of the country must have suffered even more severely. The story of

¹See Introduction to Ruth in "Pulpit Commentary," p. 8, where is reference to section 551 of "Einleitung," by Berthold, which is entitled "Das Buchenthält Dichtung."

this olden time begins at Bethlehem-Judah, or Bethlehem-Ephratah, "the fruitful." This small town was distant but two hours' journey from Jerusalem. This is the town so tenderly mentioned in connection with the death and burial of Rachel; and near it David fed his father's flocks. This town has become immortal, not simply because Ruth gleaned in its fields, but rather because there Christ was born who was "made of the seed of David, according to the flesh." Our attention is directed especially to one family among the many sufferers. This was the family of Elimelech, who was a proprietor in the locality and lived with his wife, Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. The name Elimelech means "God is King." After suffering much, this family determined to emigrate to the adjoining country of Moab. The famine may have been caused by one of the many ruthless invasions recorded in the Book of Judges; and it has been supposed that it was at the time of the occupation of the land by the Moabites under Eglon. We, therefore, see this family of four starting from their impoverished home and going to sojourn in the land of Moab, the hilly region southeast of the Dead Sea, where the descendants of Lot dwelt. Was Elimelech justified in leaving the people and altars of Jehovah to dwell among the Moabites in a land of idolatry? We must not pronounce too severely on a family dying by hunger. Doubtless he intended to remain there but a short time and then to return to the land of his fathers. But being, as it would seem, afflicted with some constitutional weakness, he soon died in this strange land; he left Bethlehem to save his life, but soon lost it among strangers. Great sorrow was in the heart of Naomi, now widowed and in a strange land. Attention is called both to her loneliness and comfort when we are reminded that "she was left and her two sons." They did not immediately return to the land of Judea; for after the father's death the two sons married in the land of Moab. Their wives were called Ruth and Orpah. Perhaps the young men had become attached to that land and to its people; perhaps, indeed, they went thither when quite young and so grew up with their heathen neighbors, and so became, in many respects, sons of Moab more than sons of Israel. We do not know whether or not their mother gave them careful instruction regarding the wives they should marry.¹ It would seem that there was no music of children in either home. The years passed from the time of their entrance into the land of Moab, and both Mahlon and Chilion, possessing by inheritance, as it would seem, delicate constitutions, sickened and died. Surely this family life is peculiarly sad. There in the land of Moab are three widows, desolate and without wealth and its comforts. Naomi hears that there is plenty again in Judea; and she determines to return. But she does not wish to interfere with the prospects of her widowed daughters-in-law. They, however, resolve to accompany her on her journey. It is beautiful to see how unselfish was the spirit of the mother-in-law on the one side, and of the daughters-in-law, on the other. Naomi feared she could not make them comfortable in her old home; she, therefore, gave them the opportunity, after they had accompanied her for a little way, to return to their early home, expressing her earnest hope that soon they might have restful and affectionate homes of their own. Probably she never was in love with Moab as were her husband and sons. Certain it is that God gave her a noble spirit, and, although afflicted so severely, she still claimed God as her God, and the land of Israel as her home.

The conduct of the daughters-in-law, leaving their native land and journeying with her, is also worthy of commendation, but the time is now come when she must prove them. She gives them the opportunity to return, and suggests the possibility of a second husband and a second and perhaps happier home. Her purpose was to test the genuineness of their determination in following her to the land of Judea; and both seemed loyal in their resolution to return with her to her people. So they journeyed until, perhaps, they had reached the border of Moab, when Naomi paused and renewed her suggestion that they return to their own land.

¹ Donald Fraser, "Books of the Bible," p. 97.

Orpah yielded to her pleading and returned to her own country; but Ruth instantly rejected the proposal. Orpah loved her mother-in-law, but she did not wish to leave Moab and its idols and journey to Judea to worship Israel's God. Beautiful is the picture of these three widowed women standing, perhaps, on the borders of Moab; the daughters kissing the Hebrew matron and all three shedding tears of grief for the dead and of sorrow at the thought of parting from one another. The hour of decision has come for them, as come it must for us all at critical moments in life. Orpah kissed the mother, but went back to Moab — returned to the vile groves of Chemosh. But Naomi and Ruth will journey to Judea, and will worship Judea's God. Ruth's mind was unchangeably fixed to accompany her beloved mother-in-law. All that was best in her soul as woman, as daughter, and as widow, rose into a heroic and poetic mood; and in a spirit of beautiful and poetic pathos she expresses the deepest feeling of her heart in words which will live forever, because of the circumstances of their first utterance, because of their unconscious rhythm, because of their intrinsic beauty, and especially because of their loyalty to Jehovah. Often as they have been repeated and sung — sung in strains of lofty and tender music — they come to us still with all their original beauty, pathos, and power. Our readers will be glad of having the words of Ruth given in a form¹ which brings out more fully than a prose translation, the original measure and movement:

"Insist not on me forsaking thee,
 To return from following thee;
 For whither thou goest, I will go;
 And wheresoever thou lodgest, I will lodge;
 Thy people is my people,
 And thy God my God:
 Wheresoever thou diest, I will die,
 And there will I be buried.
 So may Yahveh do to me,
 And still more,
 If aught but death part thee and me."²

The trial is over. Orpah has yielded to the attractions of Moab, but Ruth goes with Naomi to Judea, and thus to the home and heart of Boaz, to her place in Israel, and to immortality on the page of history, and in the speech of all civilized nations in all ages. Had Ruth gone back to Moab, her name would have been unknown in the history of the world, and she would have died in that idolatrous land without honor, without glory, without immortality. He who decides for God decides for all that is best and noblest on earth, and for all that is most glorious in heaven. Naomi yielded to the meek insistence of Ruth, and the two widows journeyed on, their hearts bound together with cords of love which no disaster could ever break.

Their weary journey is nearing its end; they, travel-worn and heart-sore, are pressing along the streets of Bethlehem looking for some humble home. All is new to Ruth, and there must have been strange joy in her heart as she journeyed through the land which Jehovah had blessed, the land of which Naomi had so often spoken. Groups of women are gathered in the streets; and the news of the return of Naomi accompanied by the beautiful young widow is reported from house to house. The name "Naomi," meaning "Sweetness of Jah," suggests painful memories and contrasts to the mind of the more aged widow. The people scarcely know her as they ask, "Is that Naomi?" In her sorrow she urges them to call her not Naomi, but Mara, because the Lord had dealt bitterly with her.³ The return is at the beginning of the barley harvest. The need of the two widows is great. It is a trial for both that they should begin their new life in such poverty. It is especially a trial for Naomi, as she has permitted Ruth to go with her to Judea. But Ruth is equal to the situation. She secures permission from Naomi to go out to the fields that she may glean for the support of both. Beautiful is the

¹ Translation in Introduction to Ruth in "Pulpit Commentary."

² Ruth i, 15-17.

³ Ruth i, 19-21.



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NAOMI, RUTH AND ORPAH.

picture as we see the young widow passing out of the city gate looking over the broad and golden fields ripe for the sickle, and in some of which the reapers, binders, and gleaners are already at work. Divine Providence causes her "hap" to light on the field of Boaz, a wealthy proprietor and distant kinsman of her father-in-law, Elimelech.¹ Perhaps the story of her kindness and faithfulness to her mother-in-law is partially known in the vicinity of Bethlehem, and so all who know her are the more ready to give her a hearty welcome. Ruth, at the moment, knows nothing of the relationship of this substantial yeoman to her late husband and his family. Beautiful are the salutations which pass between the proprietor and his workers as he reaches them in the field during the day.² The simple dignity and almost knightly courtesy of these reciprocal greetings are worthy of hearty appreciation. Boaz is not long in catching sight of the beautiful and earnest gleaner in his field. He is struck at once by the air of gentleness and nobility in the beautiful widow—an air which he has never before noticed in gleaners in his fields.³ In reply to his question, the overseer gives him considerable information regarding her, and especially praises her modest bearing and her industrious gleaning. Boaz promptly urges the young men to treat the stranger with becoming consideration, and upon approaching her informs her of the instructions he has given to the young men, and further tells her that she is to partake of the water which is drawn for the workers in the field.⁴ To be openly acknowledged by a chief man in Israel, such as Boaz is, fills her heart with equal surprise and gratitude, and, falling on her face, she bows herself to the ground.⁵ Boaz permits her to continue gleaning in his fields, and to share with his handmaids at mealtime, and he also instructs the young men to let handfuls of barley drop in her path. Upon her return she tells Naomi of the generous treatment which she has received from Boaz, the owner of the harvest fields. Naomi then gives her full information regarding the relationship between Boaz and her family, urging her to go out with his maidens and not to glean in any other field.⁶ And so, as the harvest goes merrily on, day after day, Ruth continues to glean in the fields of Boaz, sharing in the midday meal, with its bread and vinegar, and its delicious parched corn, gleaning even among the sheaves, and receiving now and then stalks which have been pulled out of the bundles for her benefit, collecting her gatherings, threshing them, taking home the load, and telling her long and joyous story to the sympathetic Naomi.

The harvest was over and enjoyment out of doors ceased; then it was that her mother-in-law discovered the desolation and loneliness of Ruth's life as compared with the happy days spent gleaning in the fields. Naomi quickly perceived that an attachment had sprung up between the noble proprietor and the hitherto lonely young widow. Boaz, however, was silent. Naomi must arrange and execute the plan which shall remove the seal from his lips, that he may tell of the love that is in his heart. She contrived a plan which could be carried out only where oriental customs prevailed. We need not be disturbed because of this plan, for we may be quite sure that it needs no apology, strangely though the story may read to us in our different social conditions and with our different domestic manners. To those who are pure, all things are pure; to those who are impure nothing is pure. There was on the side of each absolute confidence in the incorruptible honor of the other. The levirate law gave Boaz the opportunity of marrying the widow of the deceased Mahlon. Naomi's plan was in entire harmony with the moral ideas of the time, and she had perfect faith in the religious integrity of Boaz and the virtuous simplicity of Ruth. Ruth followed the suggestion of her mother-in-law, and laid herself by night at the feet of her kinsman while he slept.⁷ Tender thoughts were in the hearts of both. True, he was comparatively old, and she comparatively young; but, although the disparity in their ages might not be an objection to their marriage, there was an obstacle in the way. That obstacle was in the person of one who was nearer of kin to the deceased than was Boaz. According to the old law this unknown kinsman had a prior claim,

¹ Ruth ii, 3.² Ruth ii, 4.³ Ruth ii, 8.⁴ Ruth ii, 4-9.⁵ Ruth ii, 10.⁶ Ruth ii, 18-23.⁷ Ruth iii, 5-7.

and his rights must receive full consideration before Boaz could press his suit. Already Ruth began to rest in the certainty of the love which Boaz felt; but now Boaz could not rest until he had ascertained the intention of this unknown kinsman, and had made the effort to secure the beautiful Ruth as his bride. The anonymous kinsman must first have the opportunity of redeeming the inheritance for himself. After the night was passed Ruth returned home, received the salutation of Naomi, and further instructions from her.¹ The next day dawns and Boaz is in his place at the gate of the city.² We have here a peculiarly interesting picture of old Hebrew life; and we have a striking illustration of the operation of the old Mosaic law concerning inheritance. Local courts were held at the gate of the cities, even during the troublous times in the period of the Judges. There is excitement, we may well believe, throughout the whole town. The people know something of what is passing between Boaz and Ruth, and what the careful and skillful Naomi is designing for both; for these things could not take place without arousing the interest of all the villagers. We see the primitive court in the presence of the elders and the people at the gate of the city. On one of the stone benches, set for the accommodation of the people of the town, sits Boaz in his quiet dignity, the gateway in the East corresponding to the forum or market-place in the West. He may well believe that his kinsman will soon be passing out to his fields, or in from his threshing floor, and in any case he must soon go through the gate of the city. Just now he is seen passing. We hear the call of Boaz, "Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here."³ And then we read that "he turned aside, and sat down." If Boaz called his kinsman by name, the writer does not record the name. The language used is colloquial and demonstrative to an interesting degree—so much so, indeed, that a literal translation is well-nigh impossible. The opportunity is given to the anonymous kinsman to secure the inheritance; but when he learns that with it goes also the widow, he objects. We know not why he objects to the beautiful Ruth; it may be that he already has a wife. He assigns as a reason, "lest I mar mine own inheritance."⁴

The world has always rejoiced that this kinsman did not desire this widow, because the world has fully sympathized with the noble spirit and pure-hearted love of the gentle and generous Boaz. And now in the presence of the elders and others Boaz informs his friends that Naomi has returned from Moab and has determined, because of her poverty, to sell the property that belonged to her deceased husband. He then says, "Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people."⁵ The heart of Boaz must have throbbed strangely within his bosom. Great possibilities and disappointments or realizations are hanging in the balance! Great historic events are trembling on the answer of this anonymous kinsman! Boaz then adds that the property must be purchased from Ruth as well as Naomi, and that Ruth is to go with it as an inalienable part thereof, in order that the name of her deceased husband may be raised up on his inheritance.⁶ The kinsman will not have the widow; and his decision gives joy to Boaz, Ruth, and Naomi. He at once pulls off his shoe and hands it to his friend, indicating that he resigns all his rights in that friend's favor.⁷ All the people gathered about are witnesses to the refusal on one side, and practically to the acceptance on the other.⁸ Boaz, in the presence of the elders and the people, secures the estate and with it the beautiful widow as its most valuable possession. All the people shout "we are witnesses." Then all lift up their voices and hearts, praying that the richest blessings of heaven may come upon Boaz and Ruth now joined in hand, as they had previously been joined in heart.⁹ Thus Ruth becomes the wife of Boaz; and thus we have the first mention of a nuptial benediction in the sacred history. That benediction carries us back to patriarchal times in the simplicity, naturalness, and beauty of its family life. Ruth becomes the mother of a son who is called Obed by the matrons who give their congratulations and benedictions, and Naomi takes this

¹ Ruth iii, 14-18.² Ruth iv, 1.³ Ruth iv, 1.⁴ Ruth iv, 6.⁵ Ruth iv, 4.⁶ Ruth iv, 5.⁷ Ruth iv, 7, 8.⁸ Ruth iv, 9-11.⁹ Ruth iv, 11, 12.

boy to her heart and cares for him with a gentleness and tenderness beautiful to behold. This boy, thus born, was the lineal descendant of Judah, was the head of the royal tribe, was the lineal ancestor of great David, and of David's greater Son who was both David's son and Lord. Well may art, poetry, and music unite to narrate the incidents, paint the beauty, and sing the charms of this sweet idyl which so beautifully tells the story of Naomi, of Ruth, and of Boaz, and which so impressively suggests the glory of David, and the glory of great David's greater Son.

We cannot but remark, as we read this story, on the characteristic frankness of Scripture, which, in tracing the origin of this earlier holy family, gives us the domestic stain upon its lineage, for both Tamar and Rahab are in the line from which David came. Ruth's story is without a stain, but she took her place in that family, a striking trophy of the wonderful mercy of God, which snatched her from the doomed people of Moab and caused her to shine forevermore as a star of undimmed brightness in the resplendent firmament of Hebrew history. As the story closes we see Naomi cherishing her little grandson, the women of the neighborhood rejoicing with her, and her own heart sweetly resting in the comfort of this new family life, and joyously trusting in the God of Israel. Thus we reach the close of this delightful book, the curtain falling on the peaceful family, the love of God being in their hearts, and the peace of God in their lives.

In studying the Book of Ruth it is impossible not to see great spiritual truths under the veil of the sweet and beautiful story.¹ A greater than Boaz is here. Christ, the Lord of the Harvest, supplies the wants of men and is the true Goël and Redeemer of man's lost inheritance. He is the true Kinsman, the true Bridegroom. As Ruth came to Boaz with nothing but her own needy self, so the Church and individual souls bring nothing but their need as they lay themselves at the feet of their divine Lord. And as Ruth soon became rich with all the possessions of Boaz, so the individual soul and the divinely-saved people become rich in all the unsearchable riches and glory of their divine Lord and King. There is also a sweet personal application of this book to individual souls. If Moab represents the condition of alienation from God, Naomi and Ruth's return represents the coming of longing, hungry, helpless souls to Jesus Christ. Happy are they who choose in the great crises of life to go to the true Canaan and to receive as the heart's Lord, its divine King. There comes a time of trial for every man and woman—a time when the decision must be made between self and the world on the one side, and duty and God on the other. Happy are they who, in that crisis, choose God and his service, leaving the world and its beggarly elements! Unfortunately when that time of trial comes, Orpahs abound; there are those who start encouragingly for Canaan, for duty, for heaven; but they are governed by transient emotions rather than by abiding convictions of truth and duty. They follow for a time, but soon the dividing line between Moab and Judea is reached; and then the absolute and final decision must be made. The Lord Jesus would prove all who would come to him. They must leave all; they must take up the cross and follow him. Having put their hand to the plow, they are not even to look back, for looking back leads to going back, and going back is perdition. Only the pilgrims who persevere unto the end are saved. A solemn moment was that when these sisters-in-law were standing side by side on the border-line of decision! One chooses life; the other death. One chooses human immortality and eternal honor; the other, human reprobation and eternal silence. Beautiful was the decision of Ruth, when she determined to make Naomi's God her God forevermore—determined to live, to die, to be buried, and to rise in glory with God's redeemed children. A lesson, too, may be learned from the manner in which Naomi and Ruth were received in Bethlehem. As Bethlehem was glad with their return, so ought the Church to be, when men and women come with joy to its gates. There ought to be a glad welcome for all

¹ See Donald Fraser, "Books of the Bible," pp. 104-107.

returning prodigals. Ruth's experience, also, when she came to Bethlehem is not unlike that of many a Christian in the first stages of Christian experience. There is trial in the effort to adjust one's habits and thoughts to the new life; but soon there comes the sweet trust under the wings of the Almighty. There comes the time of going forth and gleanings, as we read the Word of God and seek his service; and we never go forth at such times in vain. He meets us evermore with handfuls of grain, and permits us to be refreshed at mealtimes with his children, dipping our morsel in the sauce prepared for his beloved. Every day when we go forth we may expect God's presence, sympathy, companionship, and inspiration. He is our near Kinsman. In the person of his Son he is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He is our Goël. Then comes the sweet and assured confidence of conscious relationship with the divine Kinsman. The gleanings give place to resting in his love and rejoicing in his presence. Taking nothing in our hand, we lie down in submission and trust at his feet. He does not treat us with doubt and hesitancy, but he gives a warm welcome and a joyous assurance. We may thus repose until the morning when more glorious things shall be in store for us. Then there will come our marriage with the heavenly Bridegroom; there will come our death, our burial, our glorious resurrection with him; there will come our indissoluble union with him, even as the branch is united to the vine; there will come our enthronement with him and our ineffable and inseparable communion in eternity.

For the unique and very full Bibliography on the Book of Ruth, see Introduction to Ruth in "Pulpit Commentary," pages 14-17. For a discussion of "Levirate Marriage"—levirate from the Latin *levir*, "a brother-in-law"—and for a fresh setting of the story, with light on the ancient customs, see "The Bible for Learners," by Drs. Oort, Hooykaas and Kuenen, Volume I, pages 424-433. The characterization of the story by Dean Stanley is brief, but interesting—"Jewish Church," Volume I, page 336. See Introduction and Comments by Keil and Delitzsch in "Commentary on Joshua, Judges, and Ruth." For excellent expository, practical and homiletical work, see Parker, "People's Bible"—Book of Ruth—Volume VI.

CHAPTER XI.

ELI AND SAMUEL, THE LAST JUDGES.

WE have studied the history of Samson, and have seen him wasting his prodigious strength in reckless exploits, and sometimes in sinful indulgence. His life, however, as a Judge in Israel was not spent in vain. His name struck terror into the hearts of the bravest Philistines, and greatly retarded the progress of their conquests. It also, in a corresponding degree, cheered the hearts of discouraged Israelites. But it must be admitted that his life was without permanent advantage to his countrymen. It was largely spent in vain; his preternatural powers were not regulated by prudence, and his moral nature was not under proper control.¹ A wiser and more moral ruler was needed, in order to secure permanent liberty for Israel and to hold her foes in constant check. Such a leader was then growing up, with many tokens of the divine presence, within the sacred precincts of the tabernacle.

We now come to the discussion of the last two men who held the office of Judge in Israel. It is not a little singular, at first thought, that the history of these two Judges is not included in the Book of Judges. In order to study that history we are obliged to turn to the beginning of the books which in the Vulgate are called the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Books of Kings. The titles of these books, with which we are more familiar, are less appropriate than those just named. The First and Second Books of Samuel are incorrectly named. Only a part of the first book tells us of Samuel, and the remaining portions are occupied with

¹ Dean Milman, "History of the Jews," I, p. 305.

accounts of the reigns of Saul and David.¹ It is, therefore, with some surprise that the student finds that the history of Eli and Samuel is in the first of these books rather than in the Book of Judges. This fact is the more remarkable if we suppose, as some authorities do, that all these five books were compiled about the same time, and possibly by the same hand. A closer examination, however, shows that there is wisdom in the present arrangement. The judgeship of Eli and Samuel is an altogether different office from that filled by Gideon, Samson, Jephthah, and other Judges whose histories are given in the Book of Judges. The true mission of Samuel was not so much in his closing the list of the Judges, as in his opening the way for the kings. He stood in special relation to David who was the most distinguished ancestor of the Messiah. The judgeship of these two men was priestly, and was intended, in some sense, to be hereditary. These two characteristics are not found in the judgeship of any of the other men who filled this office. Their work was exceptional and temporary, and it had no connection with the priesthood. None of the earlier Judges were of priestly descent. It is true that Abimelech, the son of Gideon, strove to inherit the powers and honors of his father, but he signally failed. Probably even the most earnest student of this history finds it impossible satisfactorily to explain how the judgeship changed its character so completely as we find it under Eli. There is a blank in the history between Samson's overthrow of the Philistine temple at Gaza, and the Philistines' overthrow of the Sanctuary at Shiloh. How came it to pass that Eli, who was of the family of Ithamar, Aaron's second son, became high priest? The line of Eleazar, the eldest son, was not extinct. How came it to pass that Eli should have been both high priest and Judge?² Various answers have been given to these questions, but at most they are only conjectural. It may have been that Eli was elected Judge for exploits against the Philistines early in life, and, as a descendant of Aaron, the prominence he had acquired as Judge might have led to his obtaining the high priesthood. It is difficult to think of the kind-hearted old man, whom we find sitting at the entrance to the Sanctuary at Shiloh, as the successor of Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson; and it is almost impossible to think of him as obtaining the office of Judge by fraud or force. His gentle spirit brings sadness to the heart of every reader who thinks of his sons going into sin and bringing ruin upon the family.

The conduct of the sons of Eli shows clearly the degradation of the people in the time of the Judges. Even in the priests, in the very Sanctuary, we find abominable wickedness. Hophni and Phinehas have been often described as the prototypes of sensual and degraded ministers of religion in all centuries and countries. The word "Eli" means "Ascension." He was the first high priest in the line of Ithamar; and he was also Judge of Israel for forty years. He was eminent for piety, but criminal because of his neglect of family discipline. His neglect of his duty in restraining his iniquitous sons brought upon his house the judgments of God.³ Instead of setting an example of godliness, the sons of Eli used their office simply as the means of gratifying their sensual passions. The Mosaic law required that burnt offerings should be consumed by fire on the altar; the sin offerings were eaten by the priests. The fat of the inside of the peace offerings was burned on the altar, the breast and the shoulder were the property of the priest after he had waved it before the Lord, and the rest of the victim was returned to the offerer and was eaten by him and his family and friends. But Eli's sons cared not for this divine arrangement; they cared neither for the claims of God nor the rights of the people. They sent their servants to places where the offerer's share was being boiled, and with the flesh hook, they drew out for their masters whatever it caught. They also demanded a share of the raw flesh before the fat had been offered on the altar. They thus desecrated the sacred offerings, and took away the sacred food from those to whom it rightly belonged. Their influence led to the casting of the entire service into disrepute. Many women

¹ Introduction to Joshua in "Pulpit Commentary," p. 17.

² Introduction to Joshua in "Pulpit Commentary."

³ 1. Samuel iii, 11-14.

were employed outside the tabernacle in preparing the sacred bread, attending to the holy garments, and leading the sacred songs and dances. These women the sons of Eli made their victims. Their quiet, gentle, and humble father did not use his authority as Judge, priest, and father to rebuke, with appropriate severity, such abominable conduct on the part of his sons. He merely gave godly counsel to these offenders against the laws of God and man. A prophet, and the first mentioned since the day of Moses, brought Eli the terrible message that Jehovah would inflict punishment upon his family. The details of this terrible prophecy are given us in full.¹ He also foretold that Hophni and Phinehas, Eli's two sons, would perish in one day, and that the priesthood would continue not in his line, but in the elder line, while his race would sink to obscurity and want.

A new character, and one of the most glorious in all sacred history, comes before us at this time in connection with the life of Eli. Like Moses, this remarkable man is made known to us from his birth. We once more see how God in times of depression and iniquity raises up the fitting instrument for deliverance. In Ramathaim-zophim, in the south of the mountains of Ephraim, lived the family to whom we are now introduced in the sacred story.² The name of the husband was Elkanah, meaning "whom God created;" the name of one of his wives was Hannah, meaning "grace or favor," and the name of the second wife was Peninnah, meaning "coral." Two wives are one too many in any home, however large. This double marriage did not add to the husband's happiness. Elkanah, however, was a worthy man. He was a Levite, and, even in those wild and wicked times, he went up yearly with his whole family to Shiloh at the Passover.³ Peninnah was the mother of his sons and daughters, but Hannah had neither son nor daughter. Peninnah, therefore, rightly claimed a share in the offerings for her sons and daughters, but the childless Hannah had only a single portion, although she had the larger and warmer place in his heart. We have before us the sad picture of Hannah at the door of the tabernacle, where Eli used to sit, after the family rejoicings. Her soul was bitter because of the taunts of her rival. Most beautifully is the story told of her longing and praying for a son. She vowed that if God granted her this honor and blessing she would consecrate the infant boy to him as a Nazarite. Vows in oriental lands, in contemplation of the birth of a child, are still common. The birth of a son is especially a cause for joy; but the birth of a daughter often brings such humiliation to the father that he refuses to see or speak to the mother; and her friends and relatives, especially the women, upbraid her and condole with him. Indeed, the birth of a daughter is sometimes given as a reason for sending the wife away in dishonor. In due time a boy was born to Hannah. He was named Samuel, meaning "heard of God," because of the divine response to her wifely longing and her earnest prayer. This mother was endowed with a prophetic spirit. She poured out her thankful heart in a hymn which takes rank among the finest Hebrew lyrics. This song anticipates the song of Mary, the mother of our Lord; it directly suggested to her many of her noblest thoughts and some of her sublimest expressions. The joy of her heart knew no bounds; it was as great now as her sorrow had previously been. Beautiful was the devotion of Hannah to her son, and great her gratitude to God. Year after year, when Elkanah went up to Shiloh to offer sacrifices and to pay tithes, she staid at home with the boy till he should be old enough to go with her to the tabernacle.⁴ When that time came she loaned him to Jehovah and entrusted him to Eli in the Sanctuary, where he "ministered to the Lord in a linen ephod."⁵ It was his mother's great joy, year by year, when she came up to the feasts, to bring him this simple garment made by her own loving hands.

Every child knows the story of Samuel waking at night and hearing his Maker's voice while he waited on the high priest in the sacred tent at Shiloh. It was difficult for Eli to realize that the Lord spake unto the child. In the stillness of the early dawn, while the seven-branched candlestick gave its light, the soft voice of the child was divinely chosen to announce

¹ I. Samuel ii, 27-36.² I. Samuel i, 1.³ I. Samuel i, 3.⁴ I. Samuel i, 22.⁵ I. Samuel ii, 18.

to Eli the doom of his house, because his sons had reviled God and their father had not restrained them. The word Hophni means "the fighter," and Phinehas "the brazen-mouthed." Once more the implacable Philistines are invading Israel. They drive back the people of Israel to a spot between the western entrance of the pass of Beth-horon and Beth-shemesh. The Philistines were accustomed to bring images of their gods into the battlefields. The superstitious leaders of Israel supposed that the victory of the Philistines was due to that cause. Therefore, they went across the hills to Shiloh and brought back to the camp the solemn symbol of the presence of God, with Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, as its priestly attendants.¹ As the Ark approached, the "earth rang again" with the shouts of joy on the part of the Israelites in anticipation of victory. The Philistines, learning the cause of this shouting, determined not to be the slaves of the Hebrews, but to fight with the desperation of despair, and to "quit themselves like men."² Terrible was the defeat of Israel — 30,000 perished. The iron chariots of the Philistines triumphed. That day, or the next, up the steep pass to Shiloh ran a Benjamite. He accomplished the distance of nearly thirty miles before night. All through the villages of the tribes the people were anxiously waiting for news from the army. In the Sanctuary town from which the Ark had been taken the anxiety was intense. Two of the townspeople are singled out for special mention: Eli, now ninety-eight years old and blind, sitting, as was his wont, by the gate of the tabernacle on the road, and the other the wife of Phinehas. The darkness of evening is approaching, and the young man rushes up the valley to the gate of Shiloh. Dust is on his head, his clothes are torn, and all who see these signs of grief know his sad message. A loud wail runs all through the towns.³ He presses his way to Eli; the terrible story must be told. Israel is beaten, and Hophni and Phinehas are dead; but, saddest of all, the Ark of God is taken. The old man's heart breaks with the terrible news. He falls backward from his seat smitten, as by the hand of God, and dies. The wife of Phinehas, in the excitement of the moment, becomes the mother of a living son; but the joy of this birth is almost forgotten because the Ark of God is in the hands of the Philistines. With her dying breath she calls that son Ichabod, "The glory is departed."⁴ These were terrible experiences. The nation never forgot that sad hour. Years afterward the echo of this sorrow is heard in the psalms. Indeed, this appalling calamity was associated on the part of Israel with a sorrow which no words could adequately express. The Philistines had, as they supposed, captured the chief god of their fierce foe. They carried off the Ark and placed it as a trophy in the shrine of their fish-god Dagon, in the temple at Ashdod.⁵ This was considered to be a victory over Jehovah himself. In later times various nations have captured the gods of their foes, and brought the statues and pictures to adorn their triumph. Silently the Ark was placed in the temple of Dagon, but when the next morning dawned the image of Dagon was found lying on the ground, dust-covered, before the Ark of the Lord. It was raised again to its place, but on the second morning was found, not only cast down, but broken in its upper part. This sea-god was half human and half fish. The human part was dashed to pieces, while the fish half lay dishonored and in contempt on the threshold of the cell, on which thereafter no one would step, but all leaped over it — a custom which was found in Israel long years afterward.

Soon another humiliation followed the dishonor that was done to the Ark of God. A terrible plague broke out in Ashdod, which plague of hæmorrhoids, or some similar pestilence, was accompanied by mice and other similar creatures which attacked the crops and produced a deadly destruction. Innumerable field rats still produce terrible depredations on fields of wheat and barley in Asia Minor; they also destroy vines and mulberry trees. The Philistines were glad to send the Ark to Gath, and then to Ekron;⁶ but in both these places its presence

¹ I. Samuel iv, 4.² I. Samuel iv, 9.³ See description in Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," III, p. 28.⁴ I. Samuel iv, 21.⁵ I. Samuel v, 2.⁶ I. Samuel v, 8-12.



DAVID ROBERTS.

A GREAT TEMPLE.

produced disaster; and so the foes of Israel, after seven months, were glad to send it back to the Israelites.¹ Images, in gold, of the mice and the tumors which had afflicted them were made and sent back with the Ark, one for each city. The custom of hanging beside altars in the temples models of the parts of the body which had been healed was common in Greece, and is still seen in the Greek churches of Russia, in the Roman churches in Italy, in Switzerland, and even in America.² But among the Philistines these images were not an offering for the recovery secured, for the plague was still raging; they were rather proofs that the plague had not come by chance, but had been inflicted by the God of the Israelites, because of the dishonor which had been done to the Ark of the Covenant. A striking picture is that presented to us in the sacred history when the Ark was returned. It was placed in a new cart. Two milch cows—cows never before yoked to a vehicle—their calves being left at home, drew the cart. These cows thus laid aside their natural instincts. The cart was attended by the five princes of the Philistine cities, and with its solemn load was driven to Beth-shemesh.³ It was now the month of June; the reapers were in the field as the strange procession approached, and their joy was great as the cart went slowly up the long valley. The Levites received the Ark with becoming reverence. They laid it, with the Philistines' offering, on a great stone, hastily built an altar, and, using the wood of the cart for fuel, they consumed the cows that had drawn it as a sacrifice to God expressive of their grateful joy and their devout faith. Some, however, who were tainted with the heathenism of the time, refused to join in these glad ceremonies, and many of them were smitten because of their unbelief. The number given in our version of the Scriptures, 50,070,⁴ is doubtless an error of the copyist; it is given in the Septuagint as three score and ten men. In a village the size of Beth-shemesh there could have been no such population as would have been implied in this larger number.

The Philistines followed up the success which they had won when they captured the Ark. As far north as Dan the country felt the power of their hand. Shiloh, with all its sacred associations as the religious capital, was burnt to the ground; but the Levites succeeded in carrying off the tabernacle in safety. Built on a hill, with a pleasant valley to the south, and surrounded with high hills, Shiloh was beautiful for situation, and was long the sanctuary of Israel. To Shiloh the faithful had come year by year, as did Hannah, to the great feast, to pour out their hearts before God. Near the Sanctuary the young men and maidens had held their merry-makings season after season. There, too, the *Te Deum* over great victories had often been sung. But now Shiloh was largely deserted and was sinking into insignificance and obscurity.⁵ Even its site remained unknown until Dr. Robinson rediscovered it by following the exact details given in Judges.⁶ Its early associations are still tenderly suggested by the name Seilun, by which it was long known. It is said that a small village still crowns the hill, and some ancient stones are to be seen built into the modern walls.⁷ It is believed that the site of the tabernacle has been discovered in a part of the ground which has been leveled over a space 77 feet wide and 412 feet long, the rocks being cut into to the depth of 5 feet. On this spot, as Dr. Geikie suggests, in all likelihood, rose the sacred tent, the last memorial of the wandering life of the Desert, and the first real suggestion of the permanent temple in Jerusalem. Here are the few memorials left that once marked the home of Eli and the tabernacle where Samuel spent the days of his boyhood. The tabernacle never again boasted of the Ark; and its history, after its removal from Shiloh, is wrapped in obscurity. With the building of Solomon's temple, the tender memories which had gathered about the old tabernacle perished, and it vanished entirely from history. After its return to Beth-shemesh, the Ark was removed to Kirjath-jearim, the "town of the woods." There it found a resting place in the house of a Levite named

¹ I. Samuel vi, 1. ² See Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," III, p. 32, and the authorities he quotes.

³ I. Samuel vi, 10-12. ⁴ Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," III, p. 35; I. Samuel vi, 19.

⁵ Psalm xxviii, 60; Jeremiah vii, 12. ⁶ Judges xxi, 19; Robinson, "Biblical Researches," II, p. 269.

⁷ Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," III, p. 37, and his authorities.

Abinadab for twenty years until David finally brought it, amid immortal songs of rejoicing, to its prepared habitation — to its home in Jerusalem.

Twenty years longer the Israelites must groan under the yoke of the Philistines. Samuel was now growing to manhood. He possessed not merely the authority of a Judge and the dignity of a prophet, but also the wisdom of a teacher and the functions of a priest. His influence was acquired not by warlike exploits, but rather by force of natural and spiritual character. He exercised vast authority as he judged Israel at Mizpeh. We have seen that he was possibly of Levitical origin and had been brought up in the tabernacle. He had, however, a more spiritual conception of religion than many in his time, for he allowed the Ark to remain twenty years at Kirjath-jearim. The duty of obedience to God he constantly enforced, showing the people that "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."¹ His influence led Israel to abandon idolatry and to shake off the yoke of the Philistine oppression.

All through Samuel's life he maintained his lofty tone and his sacred influence. In his old age he was able to challenge Israel to point out any one instance in which he had used his great authority for personal or unworthy ends.² Unfortunately, his sons were not like their father.³ The elders of Israel saw the danger to the nation which would come from the assumption of power by these unworthy sons upon Samuel's death. Fearing that the country would relapse into disorder, they proposed that they should have a king like the nations about them.⁴ The proposal was not the result of true faith, and Samuel protested against it. He affirmed that it was disloyalty to God. The desire, however, was granted, and God overruled all its worst elements for the establishment of the kingdom and the manifestation of his own glory. In the kingdom, as in the commonwealth, Samuel was honored for his pure character, his unwavering faith, and his unquestioning devotion to God. He was permitted to anoint the first king and the second. Without a murmur he surrendered the great political power which he had wielded. He exacted from the monarchy constitutional guarantees that its power should be rightly exercised. Then Samuel retired from his prominent place in the history of the nation. His last years were saddened by the unworthiness of King Saul; his worst misgivings when the elders asked for a king were more than realized. He died at Ramah, where he was born.

With the exception of Moses, he was the greatest man whom Israel had produced, until the days of David. He was a patriot and a prophet, a statesman, a teacher, a ruler, and one who feared the face of neither God nor man because he was conscious of his loyalty to God and to duty. In his childhood he declared the rejection of the high priest and his sons; in his old age he declared the rejection of the king; but the sorrow of this declaration was relieved by the knowledge that God would raise up David, the Bethlehemite, to reign as king over Israel, in place of Saul whom God had rejected.

In the time of Samuel, prophecy appears as one of the established and recognized features of the national life. It is true that Abraham and Moses are vaguely called prophets; it is also true that the great age of prophecy was to commence with Elijah, and to continue through the line of poet-prophets during the later kings. A sharp distinction is to be made between the primary and secondary sense of the word prophet. Prophecy — the foretelling of future events — is, in popular estimation, the dominant attribute of the Hebrew prophet; but this is not the true thought of the Hebrew word *nabi*, and the Greek word *prophetes*. These words have a much more comprehensive meaning. The *nabi* is the man who speaks in the name and by the authority of God; he is, if we may so say, the voice of God to man; he is a foreteller, also a forthteller; but, still more exactly, he is a "forteller," a spokesman. The prophet was one known by his ecstatic utterances; the verb which we translate to prophesy was occasionally used in the sense of being raving mad. The word *nabi* is generally derived from a word

¹ I. Samuel xv, 22.

² I. Samuel xii, 3.

³ I. Samuel viii, 3.

⁴ I. Samuel viii, 5.

meaning "to bubble forth" like a fountain. The prophet is discriminated from false prophets especially by the purer religious instincts in the heart of God's people. In the time of Saul this office was recognized as belonging to a class of men. There were schools of the prophets, in which a distinct and peculiar life was lived, and special training and discipline were given. The study of the law doubtless formed an important part of this instruction. The students, like Orientals generally, when they are, as they believe, under supernatural influences, were often wrought up to a kind of ecstatic excitement which expressed itself in wild dances and gesticulations. Samuel appears in the history as Judge, prophet, and teacher in the schools of the prophets. He probably established the "Schools of the Prophets." We have seen that the high priesthood passed into the older branch of the family of Eli. The priesthood itself seemed to sink into insignificance before the dignity of Samuel. He was dedicated to God as a Nazarite, and he seems to have risen to the height of his great calling. He was not a warrior like Joshua or Gideon; and there was nothing in his life of the wild and reckless valor of Jephthah and Samson. He did not possess the military skill and dash of Deborah and Barak, but he was more than either. He was the founder of a school; he created an epoch; he was more than the Luther of his day.

As a civil administrator, Samuel was equally successful. He united the tribes under his authority, and he united Israel once more to Jehovah. This was really his great achievement; this was the crowning point of his service to Israel and to God. Once more the scattered tribes become a nation, to the joy of all. The old rivals, Ephraim and Judah, made common cause against a common enemy, and even the more distant tribes gave their allegiance to Samuel, the last Judge, and to Saul, the first king. The loss of the Ark tended to unite all the tribes in a common calamity; and the return of the Ark completed the union by striking a note of hope in the heart of all of them. The result was that from the foot of Lebanon to the edge of the Desert, from the pastures of Gilead to the seacoast of Asher, the dormant religious devotion and patriotic enthusiasm of the people were aroused as seldom in their history. Even those who may have previously had but little devotion to God and much leniency toward idolatry, were now both rebuked and inspired by the great movements of the hour. Samuel held three annual sessions of justice at Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, at which there is reason to believe all the tribes were represented. In his old age, his sons were installed in the judicial office, but, unlike their father, they were venal and corrupt. The people, therefore, desired a monarchical government. Some have suggested that Moses had anticipated such an exigency, and had laid down regulations for the election of a sovereign. The king was not to be a foreigner; the independence of the country must be preserved. He was not to maintain any force of cavalry, lest he should attempt foreign conquests and neglect the internal development and security of the kingdom. The people asked for a king, avowedly that justice should be more certainly administered, and for a strong and permanent military force; that the king should go before them to fight their battles, as well as to give them just judgment. As they now had to resist powerful monarchies, and formidable leagues of the Philistine chieftains, the untrained national militia, though sufficient to quell temporary invasions of wandering tribes, could not master and overwhelm trained armies, with chariots and camels. Samuel's conduct was prudent in the extreme. He showed the people the danger of an oriental despotism, and the exactions and oppressions of arbitrary power, but he then left them to make their choice.¹ The popular feeling was strongly in favor of electing a king. The next object then was to secure the election. The king must be chosen from one of the southern tribes, as they were more exposed to inroads from powerful and implacable foes. Divine wisdom and human polity beautifully harmonized in the nomination and election of the first king. If a prince of Naphtali or Asher were chosen, the interests of Judah and Benjamin might be neglected; if a prince of Ephraim

¹ Samuel viii, 11-19.

or Judah were chosen, he would necessarily excite the jealousy of the rival tribe, and he might be in danger of exercising a domineering power over the weaker tribes.

The choice of the first king is a most interesting event in the history of Israel, partly because of its influence upon the nation itself, and partly because of its relation to the history of monarchs in all other nations. There comes before us a youth of striking beauty, of unusual height, and of superb bearing. He seems to be, as he passes before us, "every inch a king."¹ He is the son of a Benjamite chieftain, and he has been searching for some of his father's asses which were lost. To him the thought of Samuel is directed. He is given a prominent seat at a feast where thirty persons are present, and Samuel proceeds privately to anoint Saul as Israel's first king.² The young man, however, needs a course of religious training and instruction, and his heart is deeply moved with patriotic enthusiasm and religious devotion. He goes for a time to one of the schools of the prophets which Samuel seems to have instituted. There instruction is given in music, poetry, patriotism, and religion. While at this school the character of Saul is entirely changed. It had been promised that the spirit of the Lord would come upon him, that he would prophesy, and that he would be so converted as to become another man. He mingled in the sacred dances. His former levity disappeared. His wondering friends ask, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"³ We are now at Mizpeh and a solemn assembly is attended by all the tribes. Little Benjamin is designated by lot, and Saul is at once received as king; not, indeed, without some opposition from some factious spirits, but with the approval of the great majority.

Samuel at Gilgal assembled the people, and solemnly appealed to the whole country to bear witness to the justice and integrity of his administration. He invited their scrutiny, he defied their censure, he rebuked the people, both by his words and by a sign from heaven, for a thunderstorm came at the unusual time of the wheat harvest.⁴ His rebuke of the people was caused by their innovation on the established constitution without divine authority. Then he surrendered his judicial authority, and proceeded to the inauguration of the king whom they had chosen.

Samuel "stood between the dead and the living;" between the dead past and the living future. He gave up the convictions of a lifetime when he consented to the election of a king. The real foundation of all his reforms was laid in the moral and religious life of the people. He did not depend merely on his personality for the permanency of his work. He founded great institutions. What the founders of great colleges in England and America have done for their respective countries, that Samuel did for Israel. He was, as has been said, probably the first founder of great schools. Such schools were an absolute necessity to the training of David and other great leaders of the nation. *Naioth* means Students' Lodgings, and there he gathered the young men who were to lift Israel from her degradation into national honor and religious glory. The fostering of these schools was one great part of his lifework. He fostered the growth and extension of a system of national education. He also trained men to be Israel's teachers. His example has been largely followed by enlightened Protestant ecclesiasts and rulers. His example explains the power of Britain, of Germany, and of America, and his example needs to be emphasized to-day and followed in all the future. He was one of Israel's, one of antiquity's, one of the world's great men. Even in the closing decade of the nineteenth century, he stands forth worthy of honor and glory among the leaders of the great nations of the world.

We have now reached the end of the period of the Judges. It was one of alternate slavery and cruel oppression, but all the while there was a struggle for larger liberty and for a grander future. Some may affirm that the Mosaic polity failed in securing the happiness and

¹ I. Samuel ix, 2.² I. Samuel x, 1.³ I. Samuel x, 11.⁴ I. Samuel xi, 15, xii.

prosperity of the people. But it ought to be borne in mind that the principles of the great lawgiver were never fully carried out, and that the misery of the people was the result of their disobedience to the divine law ; and it ought also to be said that, during this period of perhaps 480 years, not more than one-quarter was passed under the yoke of a foreign oppression, and that some of the oppressions which marked this quarter were local, including but a few tribes, while the rest were comparatively peaceful and prosperous. We have, then, more than 300 years, notwithstanding all that may be admitted regarding this wild and stormy period, that were, on the whole, marked by national growth and prosperity.

See Milman's description of the period, "History of the Jews," Volume I, page 319. For a superb account of Samuel's character and work, and especially for the rise of the prophets, and the meaning of the word, see Stanley, "Jewish Church," First Series, Lectures XIX and XX. The critical and somewhat destructive remarks of Oort, Hooykaas and Kuenen, "The Bible for Learners," Volume I, page 433, are suggestive.

R. S. MacArthur.

BOOK VII.

FROM THE RISE OF THE MONARCHY TO ITS DECLINE.

BY

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LEWISTON, MAINE.



Martyr Samuel

BOOK VII.

FROM THE RISE OF THE MONARCHY TO ITS DECLINE.

CHAPTER I.

THE ACCESSION OF SAUL TO THE THRONE OF ISRAEL.

AS the closing years of Samuel draw on, great changes occur, which involve the civil constitution of Israel, and finally the whole fabric of the national life and character. As yet the ways of the people were simple. The land had been entered, but was still to be conquered. The Canaanite had been evicted from many of his fair holdings, but he still occupied points of vantage here and there, and years were to pass before he could be completely dislodged. The Philistine was in possession of a fertile tract to the south and west, but, since Samuel had routed him so disastrously at Mizpeh, had ceased to be a source of apprehension. The wild clangor of war was hushed, and the nation, aside from some sudden foray from its restless neighbors, was in the enjoyment of comparative peace and quietness. If a census of the population had been taken at this period it would have shown a count possibly of a million and three-quarters,¹ a material reduction from the number that came in with Joshua. That there had been loss instead of gain since entering the land may be accounted for by the withdrawal of the allies, who had come up with Moses out of Egypt, and by the decimation resulting from the protracted Canaanitish wars.

The occupations of the people were grazing and the tillage of the soil, varied by a few handicrafts of the most primitive sort. For dwellings, they were still living under tents, or in the rudest of huts. For a long time we remark no attempt at building. When at length the era of construction commences, it is necessary to import architects and skilled workmen from another country; from which circumstance it is sufficiently clear that the Jew was not yet master of the building art.

But the interval of peace was making the nation prosperous. In that mild climate, with their simplicity of manners, their wants were few, and were far more than met by the natural increase of flock and field, the surplus of which was accumulating a store of popular wealth. In this way, strangely enough, the wise rule of Samuel, which had discomfited the invader and given tranquility to Israel, became the occasion of its own subversion, darkening the last days of the grand old seer with cloud and storm. It had been foretold, under the poetical figure of Jeshurun the fattened ox,² that prosperity would render the nation restive, and, in accordance with the prediction, the enjoyment of peace and the increase of resources and power become promoters of disturbance and upheaval. At first there is the rising murmur of dissatisfaction,

¹ This estimate is based on the number of fighting men whom Saul led to Jabesh. I. Samuel xi, 7, 8.

² Deuteronomy xxxii, 15.

which, unrestrained, presently bursts forth into wide-spread clamor for radical changes in the mode of government.

As already observed in another book, after the entrance into Canaan, the established rule had been by chiefs of families and tribes; while concerns of high moment lay in the hands of the man who for the time being stood nearest to God, who in all difficult cases inquired of God, and who was the Almighty's chosen intermediary with Israel. Moses had been such a Lawgiver and Judge. Joshua, and Gideon, and Barak, Jephtha, and Samson, and Eli, and now Samuel, had been such leaders, with God as king over all. It was government not only by divine right, but also by divine rule, a theocracy, God ministering directly in civic affairs. In the eyes of the people, however, the human agent was the more conspicuous, and so, presently, with a strange forgetfulness of services which a later generation could better value, they call upon Samuel to step aside, and yield place for the appointment of a king.

Had the demand been less general, the personal influence of God's servant might have sufficed to preserve the old status; but now many influences were combining to force his consent to what, in effect, was a revolution, though happily no blood was spilled in bringing it to pass. One class of those importuning for the new order was possibly seeking change from sheer weariness with settled conditions, and from love of the stir and excitement that must attend the creation of a throne. The adventurers, no small part of the population, as subsequent events demonstrated, were eager for the opportunities for advancement which offer in the antechambers of an oriental court. The great chieftains, among whom choice of the coming monarch would be assumed to fall, were willing to indorse a movement in which one of their number might secure the coveted prize. But a still stronger motive impelled the body of the people in their headlong preference for royalty over the simpler forms of the theocracy. The Oriental is the child of custom. He clings with amazing tenacity to the ways of his neighbors and his ancestors. The sheik of the desert to-day wears his caftan and turban, cut and twined after the fashion of Father Ishmael, and gathers his household into a tent, the counterpart of Abraham's, which the patriarch pitched under the terebinth in Mamre. With such passion of imitativeness as an innate characteristic, it was difficult for him to differ in any marked degree from his neighbors. Israelitish history shows the repeatedly recurring phases of relapse into the customs and ways of the nations, and the explanation lies in the tendency of the Oriental to be like with like. And, inasmuch as the nations were governed by kings, there soon rose a great longing for royalty, and for a king with all his regal state and consequence.

But behind all these mixed motives and selfish ambitions there lay a legitimate anxiety for the national welfare. It was a critical period for the Hebrew name. Dangers were beginning to menace on the frontier. The rich grain fields, and pasture lands overflowing with flocks, tempted the cupidity of the spoiler, who was all the bolder, as Israel had so long refrained from active warfare. On the east the children of Ammon were pressing sharply, while along the west and south the Philistines were multiplying their periodical forays. If peace was to be purchased with the sword, there must be some headship for the tribes; some central authority to which all should submit; a leader whom all must obey. It is thus, through the sense of weakness, and the need of a strong arm, that kingship takes its rise. Dryden puts it none too strongly in his verse,

"Kings' titles *generally* begin by force."

The savage who wields the heaviest club, commands the tribe. The chief who can marshal the clans for battle and overpower the adversary holds the preëminence, which he transmits to his eldest, who is presumably his strongest son. The menace of disaster is the usurper's opportunity. Rome guarded herself for generations against the tyrant by requiring her dictator, after saving the republic from detriment, to surrender his prerogative and become again the

PALESTINE

under the

JUDGES AND KINGS

with the Distribution of the

TWELVE TRIBES.

THE TWELVE TRIBES

I JUDAH

II SIMEON

III BENJAMIN

IV DAN

V EPHRAIM

VI MANASSEH

VII ISSACHAR

VIII ZEBULON

IX ASHER

X NAPHTHALI

XI GAD

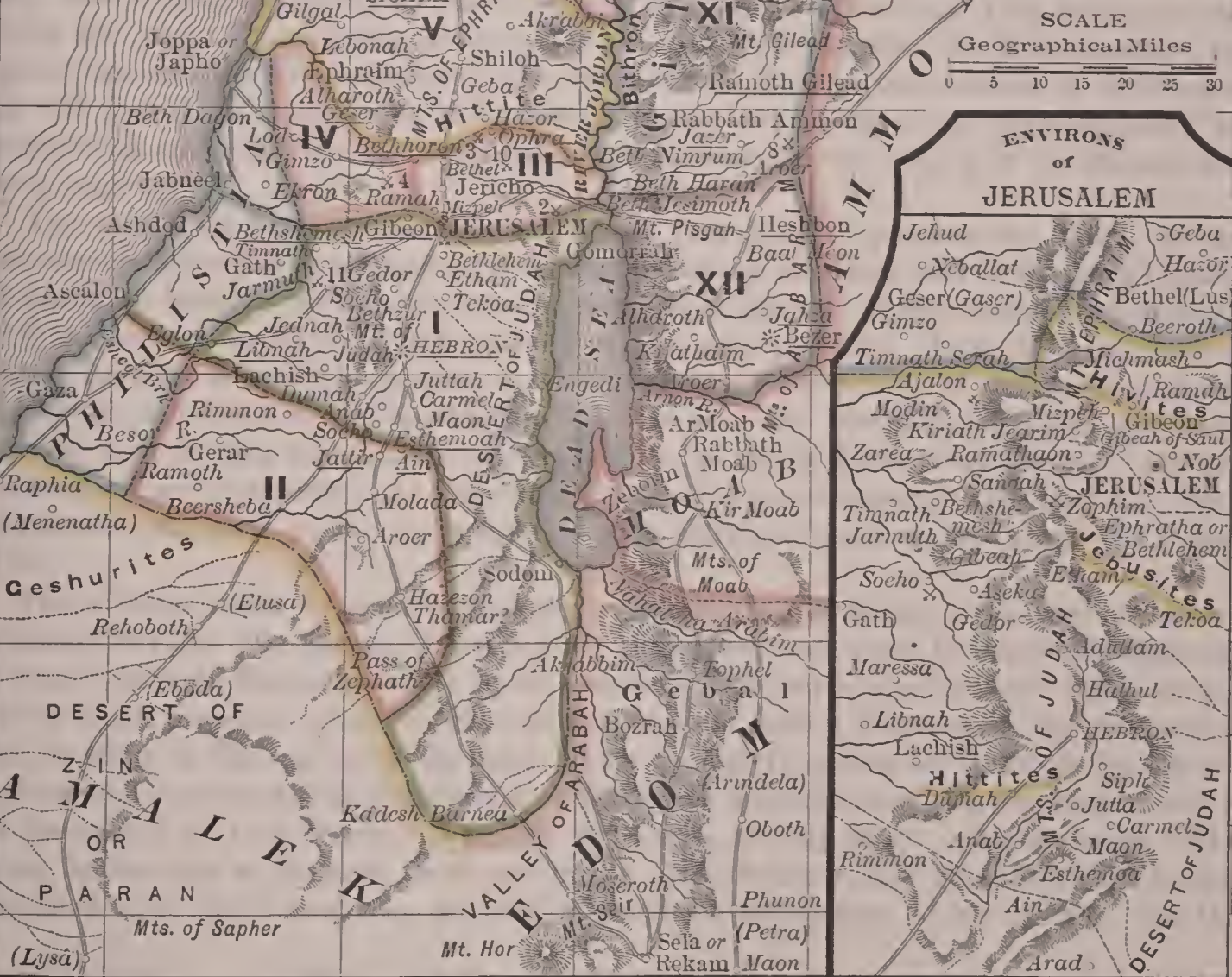
XII REUBEN

The Levitical Cities underscored

Cities of Refuge

BATTLE FIELDS

1. Moses conquest of the Ammonites (Og of Bashan)
- 2, 3, 4, 5. Joshua's victory over the Canaanites
6. Barak's and Deborah's conquest of the Syrians
7. Gideon's of the Midianites
8. Jephthas of the Ammonites
9. Samuels of the Philistines
10. Saul's of the Philistines
11. Saul's D.D. (David & Goliath)
12. Saul's encampment and death, by the Philistines.



PALESTINE

under the
JUDGES & KINGS
and the Disinherited
TWELVE TRIBES

THE TWELVE TRIBES

1. Reuben	11. Dan
2. Simeon	12. Asher
3. Judah	13. Naphtali
4. Issachar	14. Manasse
5. Zebulun	15. Ephraim
6. Gad	16. Benjamin
7. Asher	17. Simeon
8. Naphtali	18. Dan
9. Manasse	19. Reuben
10. Ephraim	20. Judah

THE TWELVE TRIBES
The map shows the distribution of the twelve tribes of Israel in Palestine under the Judges and Kings. The tribes are numbered 1 to 20, corresponding to the list on the right. The map also shows the boundaries of the tribes, the locations of the twelve tribes, and the names of the twelve tribes. The map is a detailed representation of the land of Israel, showing the distribution of the twelve tribes and the locations of the twelve tribes. The map is a detailed representation of the land of Israel, showing the distribution of the twelve tribes and the locations of the twelve tribes.



humble citizen. But she learned this wisdom only after endurance of the intolerable oppressions of the Tarquins. France sought by her Revolution to abolish the rule of kings, but the Revolution itself gave chance for the Three Consuls, for the First Consul, for the Emperor. The firm patriotism of a Washington, who was resolved that America should be self-governing, rendered possible the establishment of our Constitution, so admirable in its safeguards for the liberties of a free people. Had the Father of his Country been less virtuous, the American republic would have been an empire.

These considerations assist to an understanding of the situation in the time of Samuel. In case of invasion from across the border, could the aged prophet lead the hosts to victory? Were he to fall in battle, or be crushed in spirit by defeat, who should lift up the standard? Could the fate of the nation be intrusted to Joel or Abiah, Samuel's sons, whom he had made judges in Beersheba? Though blood may tell in the general average of a race, it is not every good man who is blessed with children after his own heart; and of these men, because of their bribetakings and evil conduct, the people were justly in fear.¹ And so, as perplexities multiply, the tide of apprehension swells, and the desire for a king extends till the impulse becomes resistless. By common consent, the elders of Israel assemble in Ramah, and, finding that they are of one mind, make formal demand of Samuel:² "Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like the nations."

Grieved to the heart at the popular waywardness, the old man carried his burden to God, to be assured that the turning away was not so much from the Judge as from Jehovah. God had led them hitherto, and was still able to deliver them from all their enemies. Nevertheless, Samuel is bidden to accede to the entreaty and provide the king, whom he is to choose under divine direction. If a crown must be had, God must determine the man to wear it. If monarchy must replace the theocracy, the new rule must still be theocratic, God lifting up and guiding the ruler. Bearing this intimation of the divine purpose from the Holy Presence, the prophet dismisses the tribal chieftains with the assurance, that for the hardness of their hearts God will give them a king, who will make their sons his servants, and their daughters his handmaidens, and levy upon their goods and their increase for the keeping of his captains and men of might.

The revolution having been thus sanctioned, God speedily provides the king. In the circumstances attending this choice, it is noticeable how he indicates, both to the man himself, and also to all Israel as well, that it is not the counsel of the wise which controls in the matter, but Providence alone, which willeth to do of its own good pleasure. As for the man, he is to be taken from the body of the people; as the Redeemer, in the fullness of times, was to choose his disciples from men in the humblest walks. He is to feel keenly that nothing in himself commends him for this high honor. He leads no tribe and is followed by no clan. He has performed no act of renown. As for reputation, he is a man unknown. He does not climb to the throne, for when he has no thought of such elevation, God's servant abases the throne to him.

The incident which introduces Saul, the overgrown son of Kish, to the page of history is absurdly trivial. His father's she-asses have gone astray, and when he has sought them far and vainly, the tall Benjamite comes to the prophet's door, imploring the seer's vision for the recovery of his property. It is this Saul, with his look of wistful helplessness, dependent in so small an affair as the tracing of the asses, whom Samuel recognizes as God's choice for the kingdom. God can make the weak things of this world confound them that are mighty, and if Saul leans hard on God, despite his evident deficiencies, he may enjoy a glorious reign. The prophet invites him to his feast, seats him in the place of honor, and gives him the choicest of the food, that which had been reserved in prophetic anticipation of his coming. On the

¹ I. Samuel viii, 3.² I. Samuel viii, 5.

morrow, as he sets forth on his return, Samuel accompanies him for some distance. At a convenient place he sends the servant forward, and, after declaring to the young man the divine will, taking a bottle¹ of oil, he anoints him prince over God's inheritance.² To impress Saul's mind with the profound importance of the act, he gives him several tokens, which will certify that all this is of the Lord. Two men shall meet him at the sepulcher of Rachel, the mother of the Benjamites, with tidings of the finding of the asses, and of his father's anxiety at his prolonged absence. At the Oak of Tabor³ he will meet three men going up to God at Bethel; one of them having three kids; another, three loaves of bread, and the third, a wineskin of wine. They are to give him two of the consecrated loaves. On approaching his home, as he draws nigh to Gibeah of God,⁴ where there is a station garrisoned by a troop of Philistines, he is to meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place; and, when these are prophesying, the spirit of prophecy is to come upon him, and he is to be turned into another man, and prophesy with the prophets.

Minute as these predictions are, all befell according to the prophet's word. At Rachel's tomb, Saul is told that the asses have been found. At the Oak of Tabor, the man presents him with the two loaves, which had been destined for the altar. When at length he reaches Gibeah of God, and encounters the "chain" of prophets descending the hill, with music and religious dance, moved to the soul by the striking confirmations of the prophet's speech, which corroborate the destiny which he has been told to expect, he is seized with a transport of religious ecstasy, and, rushing into the line, he lifts up his voice in an outburst of prophetic song. If we accept Wellhausen's suggestion,⁵ that the disorders of the time are to be credited with the awakening activity of prophecy among the young men, we can readily imagine the burden of the company's song to have been the woes of Israel, and the victory of God over the oppressor. And in such case it is not difficult to perceive how Saul, beginning to realize that he had surely been called of God to be leader of the host, should be lifted above his former self, and, in a rapture of enthusiasm, foretell the coming battles and sieges, and the discomfiture of the Ammonite and the Philistine. At all events, Saul prophesies with the prophets, a circumstance so remarkable as to give rise to a new proverb in Israel.

But the nation is to be taught how God rules in calling whom he will to the kingdom. Only a few days pass, when Samuel summons the princes and elders to a great convocation at Mizpeh. It is a solemn religious assembly, and is opened with a sacrifice to the Lord, which is offered with a solemnity appropriate to the importance of the occasion. After the celebration of the rites and a brief address, recalling how God had always been their helper and deliverer, he turns to the concern for which they are assembled, the selection of a king. The mode of procedure emphasizes the divine superintendence. There is no nomination by the heads of tribes. No great lord presents himself for the suffrages of his countrymen. The whole nation, in the person of its representatives, appears before Samuel, beside whom stands the high priest, in all the dignity of his official robes, and wearing the sacred ephod. With such impressive auspices the lot is cast, embracing every man in Israel. So at the siege of Ai, Joshua had been shown the pilferer of the golden wedge and the Babylonish garment. By like decision of the lot, Canaan had been partitioned among the tribes. So also in a later time, after earnest prayer, the disciples were taught God's will in the selection of Justus or Matthias, to take the apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell. The names of the tribes were inscribed on tablets, which were deposited in an urn, and this was agitated violently until but one was left, which was the tablet of Benjamin. The lot had fallen on Benjamin, the smallest of all the tribes, which up to this time had not recovered from its almost complete extermination, in retribution for the sin of Gibeah, in the days of the Judges.⁶ As the lots were again cast, they fell successively on

¹ "A narrow-necked vessel, from which the oil would come by drops."—Edersheim, "Bible History," IV, p. 41.

² I. Samuel x, 1.

³ I. Samuel x, 3.

⁴ So the Revision.

⁵ "History of Israel," p. 449.

⁶ Judges xx, 35-48.

the clan of Matri,¹ on the family of Kish, and finally, when the sons of Kish were presented, on Saul, the eldest, who was thus formally designated as God's answer to the nation's prayer. At the announcement of the lot, Saul is modestly missing, but by divine direction is found hiding among the baggage.

A choice so foreign to every expectation carries discomfiture to the friends of the prominent leaders, whose claims to favor have been ignored. The people shout, "Long live the king," but the acclamation lacks the hearty ring of enthusiasm. Ephraim especially, as the largest and most influential of the tribes, cherishes a sullen discontent, which is to burst into full flame in a later reign. According to oriental custom, the people lay tribute at Saul's feet, though some, who have no reputation to lose,² offer no presents, and openly scoff at the presumption of such an aspirant for the throne.

The new ruler makes no haste to assume his authority, and, with a bit of kingcraft hardly as yet to be expected of him, is conveniently deaf to all adverse comment; thus shrewdly escaping the obligation of punishing his detractors, and thereby arousing a troublesome spirit of enmity. Convinced that time will bring the fitting opportunity, as the people disperse to their homes he returns to the obscurity of his rustic occupations.

But the exigencies of the times forbid his remaining in protracted retirement. Hardly a month passes,³ when Nahash, king of Ammon, invests Jabesh, the chief town of Gilead, on the east side of the Jordan, with an overwhelming force. It seems that the inhabitants must surrender; but when they are told the barbarity of the conditions exacted by the conqueror, they are nerved to the last effort of despair. For Nahash insists on putting them all to the sword, and will spare their lives only on their submitting to his putting out their right eyes, as a reproach to all Israel. Scarcely daring to cherish a hope of success, and yet grasping at every straw, the men of Jabesh ask for seven days' respite while calling for help, agreeing, if not rescued, to yield themselves to the victor's pleasure at the end of the time. On his contemptuously granting their request, the men of Jabesh send swift messengers throughout the land; and, as the evil tidings spread, all Israel is in dismay. The towns reëcho with cries of grief, the men joining with the women in lifting the voice of lamentation. At nightfall, when Saul comes, driving his yoke of oxen from the field up the hill of Gibeah, he hears the mourning of the people. When told of the calamity which faces the men of Jabesh, his heart swells with indignation. He is a Benjamite, and the men of his tribe are known far and wide as the most accomplished fighters of the Israelitish host. Shall Benjamin sit supinely while Jabesh, knit to the tribe by the maternal tie,⁴ is crushed in the writhing folds of the Serpent of Ammon?⁵ In a blaze of righteous wrath he ceases to be the retiring herdsman, and becomes "every inch a king." Pausing not for counsel, he slays the oxen, and hewing them in pieces despatches the bleeding parts into all the tribes with the sharp summons, that so it shall be done to all who come not forth after Saul and Samuel. The nation, realizing that it has a leader, at last rises in its might and pours out its warriors in a veritable landsturm. Thirty thousand men of Judea, and 300,000 of the rest of Israel, throng into the region of Bezek, and, by a forced march, push on over the twenty miles between Bezek and Jabesh in three columns, to fall upon the Ammonitish army, just before dawn of the last day of the respite. The surprise in its completeness reminds the historian of Washington's attack on Rahl at Trenton, or of the shock of Bonaparte's landing at Cannes to Louis XVIII. The Ammonite had not suspected that Israel would dare to fight, and these thousands pressing him from every side drive him to headlong panic. The besiegers scatter, with Israel in close pursuit, and Nahash,⁶ their king, is slain. It is a great deliverance. Jabesh pours out its gratitude to the young king, and years afterward redeems its obligation by a service of danger and sacrifice.

¹ I. Samuel x, 21.

² "Sons of Belial," I. Samuel x, 27.

³ I. Samuel xi, 1.

⁴ Judges xxi, 12.

⁵ "Nahash" signifies "Serpent."

⁶ Josephus, "Antiquities," VI, v, 3.

But the immediate effect of the battle is to place Saul securely in his kingdom. In the hour of triumph Samuel proposes another national convention, to be held this time in Gilgal, where the gathering will be free from interference by the Philistines. The place is on the west of the Jordan, near Jericho; and is memorable as the first camping place of Israel, on its occupation of the land under Joshua, and the spot where the first Passover was observed in the Land of Promise. Like Mizpeh, it was a sacred gathering place; and hither the clans come in multitude, their hearts buoyant with a national hope, born of the recent victory. The sacred historian places it on record that "all the people went to Gilgal." The usual sacrifices are offered. Samuel once more reminds them of his faithfulness in service, and of God's gracious providences in all their eventful past. He assures them that they can hope for prosperity only as they cling to the Lord, and serve him with their whole heart. If they will do this, he will still pray for them, and teach them the good and right way.

But while the monarchy is thus again solemnly intrusted into the hands of Saul, it is to be observed that it is to be theocratic. The kingship has its limitations, which Samuel has recorded, and laid up¹ in the Ark of the Covenant beside the Book of the Law. Saul is not to govern as a despot, nor to hold the arbitrary authority of the kings of Phœnicia or Philistia. He is rather to be the leader of armies, and, even in the declaration of war and the prosecution of campaigns, to seek direction from God.

In some degree he accepts this position, and rarely troubles himself with civil affairs.² He maintains no court, and lives in the simplest way with his household, whenever the peace of the country permits. In the earlier part of his reign, he is submissive to the divine leading as announced from the Sanctuary; and, had the depth of his religious nature been sufficient to counteract the impulse which seized him afterward to grasp after powers which it was not intended for him to exercise, his career might have been one of constantly increasing glory.

He was an able soldier, prompt in action, and skillful in the disposition of his troops. He finds his country strong in numbers, but weak for want of military discipline, and weighted down by the growing might of Philistia on the southern border. It is a great commander who can rally a shepherd and farming people, and teach them to strike great blows for independence; and though it is David who finally breaks the yoke of the oppressor, we trace the beginning of the nationality to the inspiring leadership of Saul.³

¹ I. Samuel x, 25.

² Wellhausen states the case almost too strongly when he says of Saul, "He recognized as belonging to him no other public function besides that of war; the internal affairs of the kingdom he permitted to remain as they had been before his accession."—"History of Israel," p. 450.

³ "Saul and David made out of the Hebrew tribes a real people 'in the political sense.'—Wellhausen, "History of Israel," p. 413.

CHAPTER II.

THE PHILISTINES, AND THEIR OVERTHROW AT MICHMASH.

THE logical consequence of the defeat of the Ammonite, and of the ratification of the kingdom at Gilgal, was the renewal of aggressive measures on the part of the Philistines, who were shrewd enough to foresee a decline of their ascendancy unless this popular movement could be checked.

This people, settled in the fertile district of the Shephelah, the great maritime plain to the south and west of Judea, by their thrift with the plow and their prowess with the sword had become great and powerful. Their barley harvests, the produce of their vineyards and olive groves, and the increase of their extensive sheep pastures were sources of wealth in themselves, to which they added by the practice of many handicrafts, and by carrying on a wide commerce with Egypt and Arabia. For protection in time of war they had fortified their five chief cities, Gaza, Askelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath, which they constructed with such art as to enable them to endure the fiercest sieges.

As their power augmented, they made increasing inroads on the territory occupied by the tribes, and were able to control the three principal caravan routes which traversed the country; Ashdod and Gaza especially being the keys to traffic with Egypt. The presence of the Philistine army as far north as the hill country of Gilboa, in the last days of Saul, is to be explained by their having followed the upper caravan line along the coast, which turned eastward through the rich plain of Esdraelon, skirting Gilboa and Little Hermon, and then passing down to the fords of the Jordan. During the rule of the Judges, Israel suffered much from the Philistines. As already noticed, Samuel had checked their depredations for a season by his victory at Mizpeh. But the truce was more apparent than real. A struggle to the death between two nationalities of such vigor was inevitable. So Rome and the Etruscan Veii must battle, till after three and a half centuries of warfare the Etruscan stronghold is blotted from existence. So Rome and Carthage, though separated by the breadth of the Mediterranean, lock arms till Carthage falls. In the logic of events it must be the same with Philistia and Israel. Neither can be content till its rival yields. For the time the odds seemed in favor of Philistia. It had the higher civilization, which commonly overshadows the lower civilization at its side. Though Israel enjoyed the purer faith, Gaza and Askelon were more advanced in the industrial and mechanical arts. The Philistines wove fine cloths, those of Gaza being especially famous. Their smiths fashioned all manner of tools and weapons of war, as well as equipments for the soldiery. Their artisans were busied in various crafts, which the luxurious life of the townspeople easily supported. In Israel, on the contrary, such occupations dwindled, as each household arranged to supply its own simple needs. And Philistia had good reason for self-gratulation when she compared her established military organization with the feebleness of the scattered tribes. Her soldiers were trained and equipped for regular service in the field, while Israel's fighters were minutemen, armed as chance permitted, and helpless in the plains against Philistia's horsemen and terrible war chariots.

Upon the accession of Saul, the incursions of the Philistines into Israelitish territory became more frequent and formidable. They appear to have made no attempt at permanent occupation of the country, their policy being to intimidate and overawe a hill people for whom they cherished a hearty contempt. At harvest time they dispatched foraging parties, who carried

off the grain from the fields,¹ or, falling upon a village, seized the people to sell them as slaves,² or, taking possession of commanding points, established posts³ from which to send out predatory bands at pleasure. Such garrisons are mentioned as stationed at Gibeah of Saul, about three miles north of the hill of Jebus, which was afterward the site of Jerusalem; and at Geba and Michmash, which face each other as they overlook the intervening "Valley of the Acacias"—the Wady-es-Suweinit—in the hill country of Benjamin.

Concerning the first ten or fifteen years following the confirmation of Saul at Gilgal, the sacred historian is strangely silent, evidently constructing his narrative with an eye to the approaching prominence of David. Still, from incidental references it is apparent that the terrorizing policy of Philistia was pursued with relentless vigor. By a refinement of statecraft they had seized the workers in metals and deported them to their own towns as slaves, thus disarming the nation⁴ and compelling the farmer to pay tribute to their cities for the repair of his tools. Wellhausen is inclined to question this statement, regarding it as an unhistorical exaggeration;⁵ but from what has been noticed, such a measure harmonizes with the general policy of the Philistine kings, while the Biblical statement is as explicit as language can make it. Meanwhile the periodical forays were conducted on an enlarging scale, till, at the mere rumor of a plundering expedition in force, the inhabitants of whole districts would desert their homes for the fastnesses of the hillside, or seek a place of safety across the Jordan.⁶

Having borne such outrages till patience had lost its virtue, Saul resolves to make a bold stand for his country's life. Hastily enlisting 3,000 fighting men, he stations 2,000 along the heights from Bethel to Michmash, thus controlling the upper caravan road, from which an attack might first be expected, and the third thousand at Gibeah of Saul, the home town, under command of Jonathan, who has grown to manhood and is the idol of his father's heart.

This young prince, whom the rising spirit of independence introduces to the narrative, is one of the most engaging figures of Old Testament story. As with Joseph, every representation of the sacred historian is to his advantage. Faithful as a son through every vicissitude, loyal as a friend to the point of sacrifice, brave in battle, dashing in action and winsome in companionship, we cannot wonder that he was idolized by the nation, and that, meeting the son of Jesse, the two were mated evermore.

"Great souls by instinct to each other turn,
Demand alliance, and in friendship burn."⁷

The king in disposing his forces in such a manner as to place himself nearest the enemy, who must come up by the way of Bethel, and, by making Jonathan's band a sort of home guard for Gibeah, apparently intended to keep his son well out of danger while he was growing into the discipline of a soldier; but, if so, his plans miscarried. For hardly is Jonathan installed over his thousand, when his resistless valor drives him to strike the first blow of the war.

On the verge of the wady through which runs the main road from the coast to the Jordan valley, right across from Michmash, stands Geba, about an hour and a quarter to the north⁸ of the point where Jonathan was stationed, a town set apart for the priests when not in service in the Sanctuary, and a point of strategic importance. With an eye to this fact, the Philistines had made it one of their principal settlements, and had stationed here a tribute collector and a garrison. By a sudden assault, Jonathan overpowers the place and puts to death the officer in charge.⁹ It is an act of high daring, and Saul, recognizing that the Philistines will accept it as

¹ I. Samuel xxiii, 1.

² Amos i, 6.

³ I. Samuel xiii, 17, 18.

⁴ I. Samuel xiii, 19.

⁵ "But the assertion that they had confiscated all weapons and removed all smiths, may be regarded as an unhistorical exaggeration."—Wellhausen, "History of Israel," p. 448.

⁶ I. Samuel xiii, 6, 7.

⁷ "The Campaign," Addison.

⁸ "Geba is only about an hour and a quarter north of Gibeah."—Edersheim, "Bible History," IV, p. 64. "Ramah and Gibeah were on the south, at short distances behind Geba."—Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," III, p. 98.

⁹ Ewald, Wellhausen, and Kuenen read "governor" or "officer" instead of "garrison" in I. Samuel xiii, 3.



BIDA.

THE POOL OF SILOAM.

a challenge for retaliation, sounds the war horn, summoning all Israel to defend their homes against the invader. Under counsel of Samuel, he names the ancient shrine of Gilgal, the place where he had been confirmed in his kingdom, as the rendezvous for the army of resistance. Thither, after seven days, Samuel is to come to meet the king, and Saul is directed to await his arrival before taking any important step.

For their part the Philistines are not idle, but promptly assemble an immense force, and come crowding up the difficult passes from the plain, drafting into their ranks such Israelites as they have captured on the way; and so move down the valley of Michmash with 6,000 horsemen, 300 war chariots, and a multitude of infantrymen, whose numbers the Scripture likens to the sand on the seashore, and set their camp to the eastward of Beth-aven, placing their advance outpost on the naturally fortified heights of Michmash.

The approach of this mighty host fills the Hebrews with consternation. How shall these shepherds and farmers cope with this avalanche of disciplined soldiery? In the hopelessness of their cause the people scatter to hiding places in cisterns and grain pits, some not halting till they come to refuge in Gilead and Gad, beyond the Jordan. The general panic interferes with the recruiting at Gilgal. Reports arrive from the hills to the effect that the Philistines are sending out reconnoitering parties, preparatory to an advance. The souls of the people sink with terror, and some of the earlier recruits slip away from their places in the ranks. Saul, as military commander, feels that prompt action is necessary to forestall the complete demoralization of his army. But before he can begin operations, the sacrifices must be offered, without which no nation of antiquity ventured into an engagement. The king remembers Samuel's explicit direction to tarry the seven days at the rendezvous, and yet his impatient spirit chafes at the delay. As day succeeds day he presently asks himself if he shall order the sacrifices, or await the coming of the prophet.

While balancing this question of submission to the divine law, Saul is under trial of his faith, and stands at the crisis of his life. Gideon, who trusted in the God of his fathers, could dismiss thrice ten thousand warriors from his camp and yet eagerly smite the Midianites with only his valiant three hundred. If Saul leans on Jehovah of Hosts, what matter whether those against him be many or few? But, the worse for himself, for some reason he has been chafing against control from the Sanctuary, and his headlong will now urges him to the extreme of bidding the priests begin the rites. Such a step, however, means nothing less than casting off the influence of Samuel, and repudiating the authority of the Tabernacle. It will be resistance to the divine command, and consequently a practical defection from God.

That Saul is conscious of grave error, though, like most sinners, he will not look his wrong-doing in the face, is apparent from his hesitation till the last day of the seven; when, at his word, the bullocks are slain, and the smoke of the burnt offering drifts over the camp. Hardly has this breach of the divine law been committed, when the prophet comes with sharp rebuke. Before the peace offerings are presented at the altar he sternly asks, "What hast thou done?" Stricken with a vague alarm the king stammers out his excuses, but they are of no avail. He has set his will against the will of God; as king of Israel defying the King of Kings. He had disobeyed the law. "In that indifference to law,"¹ so Maurice remarks wisely, "lay the seeds of arbitrary government, the pretensions of an aristocrat." Still more, he has violated the tacit covenant, which had made him ruler under the theocracy. In the act he has separated himself from God, and so from the kingdom. At once the prophet pronounces judgment. Saul's kingdom shall not continue, and God will seek another, one more after his own heart, and appoint him prince over Israel. With such parting condemnation, Samuel withdraws from the camp, leaving the chagrined and remorseful king to enjoy his new-found independence as best he can.

¹ "Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament," p. 27.

After this open breach with Samuel, Saul cannot remain in Gilgal. The rage of emotion must have vent in action, and he hastens up the steep valley, following the by-paths, and joins Jonathan, who from his station at Geba¹ is watching the foe. On numbering their fighting men the leaders find that they have but six hundred, though these are doubtless the bravest of all who had followed them. But the prospect of repelling the invasion with such a remnant is so hopeless, that the king and the prince royal, as they stand on a jutting crag and watch the gathering banners of the foe on the hillside across the valley, lift up their voices in an outburst of oriental lamentation.²

But dark as the hour might seem, God had not deserted his inheritance, and he now reaches out his hand in one of those mysterious interpositions, of which the history of the chosen people furnishes so many examples. The army of the Philistines lies on the ridge of the watershed, and along the upper part of the wady which falls toward Jericho. It is overpowering in numbers, but its strength ultimately appears to be its weakness. If such a multitude might seem to be of advantage on the open plain, here in the mountain defiles, and along the raggedness of the torrent beds, the greater the forces, so much greater the chances of confusion in action. And the nature of the host, composed as it is of regular troops, of mercenaries hired from the wilderness tribes, of Israelites who have been impressed into service in the last few days, and of slaves who could have no keen sense of loyalty to Philistia, forbids anything like unity of feeling or enthusiasm of purpose. Then, also, the consciousness of power and the confidence in the protection for the front afforded by the strong fortress of Michmash lead to a sense of security all the more disastrous, when for any reason it proves ill-founded.

The position of the garrison at Michmash might well occasion confidence, as it is most favorable for defense. The traveler can still trace, on the northern side of the wady, the three mounds and the tongue of land which Josephus identifies as the outpost of the Philistines. The cliff falls sheer and precipitous to the defile below, which, while broader to the east, here contracts to a narrow gorge. Across the deep ravine and on the heights beyond appears the site of Geba, the post of Jonathan; but though no more than an hour away as the crow flies, the almost perpendicular walls of the wady forbid all communication, except by a circuitous route of many miles. Mr. Harper, of the Palestine Exploration Fund, has recently visited the spot, and reports the cliff of Michmash, while apparently inaccessible, not absolutely impassable to enthusiastic intrepidity.³

In his earnest hope to save his country, Jonathan ponders a plan for scaling this cliff and surprising the fortress. From all human prevision the project is immeasurably foolhardy, but the prince believes that it is of the Lord. To forestall any chance of opposition he confides in no one aside from his armor-bearer, who is to accompany him. Having made his preparation, he gives his mind to action, feeling, doubtless, as Bacon has wisely observed, "In meditation all dangers should be seen, in execution none, unless very formidable." In the darkness of the night he creeps down the south wall of the wady, crosses the interval at the bottom, threading his way through the inextricable maze of mounds and hummocks, impassable except to those perfectly familiar to the place; and, having reached the farther side, creeps cautiously up the rocky wall, where a single misstep would prove fatal. He times his perilous enterprise so well that he arrives on the plateau just as the day is breaking.³ The sentinel on guard is unsuspecting of assault. Thinking the intruder to be one of the Hebrew fugitives who has grown weary of hiding, he gives the merry challenge for him to come up, where he will show him a sight. Accepting this as confirmation that his enterprise is of the Lord, Jonathan hastens to the summit, followed closely by his armor-bearer. Once at the top, he plies his darts and his

¹ So the Revision, following the Hebrew.

² I. Samuel xiii, 16, Septuagint.

³ "It must have required a cool head and steady nerve to climb this cliff. To look at it now, it seems impossible, but it has been done by Major Conder and the survey party."—"The Bible and Modern Discoveries," p. 277. ³ Josephus, VI, vi, 3.

dreaded Benjamite sling with such impetuous ardor that twenty of the defenders fall. Eder-sheim accounts for Jonathan's success by supposing the conflict to have occurred on a narrow ridge, where the Philistines were compelled to meet him in single file.¹ In any case, however, there is no resisting the force of his onset. The survivors flee in terror, and as their fear spreads to others a great tumult arises. Soon one of those inexplicable panics, like that which befell the army of Sennacherib before Samaria, and the other which kept all London under arms through the terrible Irish Night, after the flight of James II.,² strikes the host, and in a moment it is wild with the madness of unthinking terror. Each man dreads he knows not what, and strikes he knows not whom. The path up the hills becomes a scene of inextricable confusion, the Philistines turning their arms against themselves. The drafted Israelites, seeing that their moment of vengeance has come, smite their oppressors. Saul, from across the wady, hears the clamor and leads his troops in hot pursuit. The men of Ephraim pour down from their pasture lands, and, taking position on the heights, hurl javelins and rocks upon the heads of the retreating horde. The battle becomes a flight, and the flight a rout. The struggle of pursuers and pursued sweeps on past Beth-aven, and down the western valley, until by night-fall the enemy has been driven some twenty miles, to take refuge, after great slaughter, behind the gates of Ajalon.

It is a great victory for Israel, and has nothing to mar its triumph except the rash imprecation of Saul, who had invoked a curse on any who should eat food that day, and which comes so near to costing the life of his son. In the eventide, after the people, who had been fasting all day, had slaughtered sheep, oxen, and calves, and, hastily cooking the flesh, had eaten and been refreshed, Saul was hot to resume the pursuit of the foe. But on inquiring of the Lord, there was no response. At once Saul summons the people to a lot, to discover where sin had been that day, and vowing that, though it were with himself or with his son, the guilty one must die. As the lot was cast, the people escape, and Saul and Jonathan are taken. The king demands a perfect lot between the two, and now Jonathan is taken. Saul demands of Jonathan to confess, and he admits, while he was hurrying in the chase, that he had dipped the tip of his rod in some wild honey, and had touched it to his tongue. For this light offense Saul would have fulfilled his impetuous oath, and have ordered the prince to death. But the people do not forget the hero of the day, and interpose to prevent the execution of the royal decree. So Jonathan is spared, doubtless to Saul's intense relief. As to the Philistines, their disaster is so overwhelming that years pass before they venture on another invasion of Israelitish soil.

To Saul the unexpected turn of fortune brings great revulsion of feeling. He has been thrust into the pit of despair, but the one day has freed his country from the yoke of vassalage, and restored his self-confidence. True, he is parted from Samuel, and has made such rupture with Ahijah, the high priest, whom he brought from the Sanctuary at Nob, that there is no more inquiring at the Ark³ for the rest of his reign. But why should he mourn for the priest more than for the prophet; or why should he trouble himself for either when victory crowns his standard? At once he assumes more of the authority of a king,⁴ and sets up the nucleus of a standing army, with its officers and captains. He places the host, the great body of the tribal militia, under command of his kinsman Abner, believing that this cousin was related near enough to himself to insure his loyalty, and yet not so near as to imperil the royal succession by misuse of his high dignities. With this force he engages in a series of sharp campaigns, in the course of which he humbles the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Idumaeans, and the Syrians of Zobah, whose little principality to the north had become too aggressive. Everywhere that he leads, success crowns his standards, and the nations are smitten with fear at this redoubtable king and the rising glory of his arms.

¹ Eder-sheim, "Bible History," IV, p. 66.

² Macaulay, *England*, I, x, p. 604.

³ I. Chronicles xiii, 3.

⁴ "So Saul took the kingdom."—I. Samuel xiv, 47.

CHAPTER III.

THE WANING STAR OF SAUL.

SAUL'S most important movement at this period of his power, and the one involving the most far-reaching consequences, is his expedition against the Amalekites. In its military aspect it is completely successful, and yet it is also his ruin, because of his continued disobedience to God. The Amalekites were a desert race, occupying the region of Arabia Petra. They roved, with their flocks and herds, from the Sinaitic wilderness to Canaan, in which, from the names which have lingered for ages, it seems that they must at one time have had strong foothold. They opposed the march from Egypt, and Joshua was despatched against them and fought them all day long, while Moses watched the varying battle from the cliff of Horeb. Notwithstanding this defeat, they persisted in their depredations, giving the tribes no respite from their guerrilla assaults. Just before the crossing into the Promised Land, in union with the Canaanites, they inflicted a severe repulse on Israel at Hormah. The people of God had no more bitter or inveterate foe than these Bedouin marauders, who must at last have been perpetrating acts of aggravating atrocity beyond what appears in the record; for Moses had made vow of unceasing war¹ with Amalek. There is also allusion to the enmity of this nation in Deuteronomy,² where Israel is bidden, when it has secured its rest in the Lord's land, to blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

Toward the last days of Samuel — the history furnishes no clue for accuracy in date — it appears that the tribe had renewed hostilities, this time from the south, in the territory of Judea. Roused by tidings of the bloody deeds of the Amalekite king, the aged prophet emerges from his retreat at Ramah, and calls upon Saul to recognize his heritage of vengeance against the ancient enemy, and bidding him to make Amalek a *Cherem*,³ an object devoted to utter destruction. That Saul may not mistake his meaning, the prophet specifies that he slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. Nothing of Amalek that breathed was to be left alive.

The king accepts the commission and quickly gathers an army of over 200,000 fighting men, 10,000 of them being men of Judea, who from this time forth begin to appear more prominently in the national life.⁴ With this enthusiastic army he makes a forced march to the principal city of his adversary, no trace of which now remains. Here he lies in wait in a convenient valley, while he performs an act of gratitude to the Kenites. Remembering their former kindnesses to Israel, he bids them withdraw from the Amalekites, with whom their nomadic habits had brought them into association. When the Kenites are well away, he rises upon his foe with such swift attack as to forbid successful resistance. The Amalekites are completely overthrown; their Agag,⁵ or king, falls into the hands of Saul, and the fleeing remnant of their command is hotly pursued to the Isthmus of Suez, on the way toward Egypt.

The booty that falls to the lot of Israel in flocks and herds is immense, and rouses another conflict in the heart of Saul. He desires to commemorate his signal victory with suitable memorials, and would have some trophies to display on his return to the home cities. Shall he

¹ Exodus xvii, 14-16.

² Deuteronomy xxv, 19.

³ I. Samuel xv, 3.

⁴ "Through Saul, Judea entered definitely into the history of Israel; it belonged to his kingdom, and it, more than most others, supplied him with energetic and faithful supporters."—Wellhausen, "History of Israel," p. 451.

⁵ Agag was a common title of the Amalekite kings. See Hengstenberg, "Pentateuch," II, p. 307. Compare the Aga, the commander of the Janizaries, and also Pharaoh, Kaiser, and Tsar.

execute the command of "Devotion," slaying the Agag, and destroying all this wealth of oxen, and cattle, and sheep; or, may he not preserve them, under pretext of offering them to the Lord? Like another who asks, "Why was this waste of the ointment made?" he prefers his own will to that of God. So he returns from his expedition, setting up a trophy on the way at Carmel, a city in the mountains of Judea, and goes on to Gilgal with his wealth of spoil, willing, like many another sinner, to offer a little to God, if so he may palliate his holding the lion's share for his own uses.

But this breach of the divine command is more flagrant than the other, when the king failed to await the prophet's coming before kindling the sacrifice. In Ramah, Samuel has a vision in the night season. Once more God declares that Saul has turned away from his commandment, and has forfeited the sovereignty. The prophet cries in supplicating protest all the night, but the judgment stands. This king is perverse in his disobedience, and God must withdraw from him. Bearing this direful message, Samuel visits Saul at Gilgal, where the king is already making the altars smoke with the offerings of cattle that should never have left the desert. Arriving, Samuel utters his stern command, "What meaneth this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen, which I hear?" The king explains that the people are sacrificing the best of the sheep and the oxen to Samuel's God, and that the rest he has utterly destroyed. It is a vain excuse. The favor of God cannot be so easily purchased. As the prophet declares, "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." The king's sin is great; his perversity, beyond remedy. Samuel rends away the veil of pretexts with which Saul has covered his frowardness. His rebellion against God is as iniquitous as divination, and his stubbornness as base as if he had bowed the knee to teraphim and to the idols of the heathen. This time there can be no reprieve, and the kingdom must pass from a hand so unworthy.

At this word there follows one of the most dramatic scenes in history. The king, humiliated, pleads with the prophet, confessing his sin, and virtually beseeching yet another trial. But Samuel turns away. To detain him the king catches hold of the skirt of his robe, but there is no yielding, and the robe is rent in his hand. It is a prophecy, which Samuel interprets. God has rent the kingdom from Saul and given it to one near him, who is a better man than he. For a king the circumstance is immeasurably painful. If the prophet retires in this mood, Saul is dishonored publicly before his people. Will not Samuel tarry at least till the king has prostrated himself in worship, and so do him some honor in the sight of his lords and retainers? To this Samuel consents. But when Saul's devotions are concluded, Samuel calls for the Agag to be brought to the altar, and there saves the nation from responsibility for the violated vow by hewing the captive to pieces with his own hand. It is a terrible retribution, one which seems unnecessary to our modern sensibilities, cultured as they have been under the sweet teachings of the Gospel, and yet it was quite in keeping with the rude justice of the time. Having given this practical rebuke for the king's disregard of the *Cherem*, for the second time Samuel leaves Saul in Gilgal; and though he continues to mourn for the man he once anointed, he comes to his presence no more.

And now a dark change settles down upon the fortunes of Saul. The campaign against Amalek marks the summit of his renown. Other victories crown the arms of the nation, but the people sing the praises of other chieftains. He has braved the King of Kings, and his soul is clouded with distrust, which soon passes into a brooding melancholy. The kingdom is to be intrusted to another, and he questions within himself who that other may be. He knows nothing of Samuel's going down to Bethlehem and of his secret anointing of the lad David, the youngest son of Jesse, but he realizes that the parting word of the prophet was no idle threat. He is conscious that the ban of God has fallen. Daily he grows more querulous, and subject to fits of brooding sadness, in which he becomes suspicious of his most loyal servants,



W. B. SCOTT.

DAVID PLAYING BEFORE SAUL.

and doubts the fidelity of his truest friends. The Bible represents his condition as the product of his folly, for the occasion of his trouble is "an evil spirit from the Lord."¹

The courtiers are distressed at their king's sorrow, and suggest that he try the soothing effect of music to distract his mind from care. The proposition was wise. Others who have experienced this strain of melancholy have been relieved, like Luther, by playing on the flute, or, like Abraham Lincoln, by resolutely turning the mind into another channel. When Boswell once remarked to Dr. Johnson that he might rid himself of disturbing thoughts by thinking them down, the grim philosopher replied, "To attempt to think them down is madness."² His specific was rather a book, or a course in chemistry, or even a course in rope dancing. It is said that Philip V. of Spain was cured of a mental disorder by the repeated playing of a skilled musician. And so search is made for a harper, and the one whose fame has already reached the farthest for "cunning in playing" is the young shepherd of Bethlehem. The list of his virtues as reported to the king shows that already, though scarcely more than in his eighteenth or nineteenth year, he betrays the marks of future greatness. For besides his skill in music and his beauty of person, he is described as a mighty man of valor, a man of war, and prudent in business.³ With that urgency of the oriental rule which regards the will of the throne as overriding all private concerns, the messenger is dispatched with peremptory summons for Jesse to send David, his son, who was with the sheep.

Taking his gift in hand, without which no one ventures before an oriental despot, David presents himself to Saul at Gibeah. We are to think of him at this time as a young lad, on the verge of manhood, ruddy, and of frank and open countenance. He has already fought with wild beasts in close encounter; when, as with Samson, the Lord was with him so manifestly as to give him a profound sense of the divine watchcare, as well as renown with the people. But most of all, his communion with nature had stimulated his natural feeling, and given him that appreciation of beauty in thought and expression which characterizes the poet, who is born, not made. Before this time he has written some of those sublime compositions, which, in the psalter, are the vehicle for the raptest devotion and the utterance of the most exalted aspiration of the ages.

His music, as he stands playing before the king, is the blended song of the psalm and the rhythm of the harp in sweet accompaniment. It is a touching sight—the gloomy king sitting sunken in morbid fancies, and the bright youth, whose fortunes henceforth are to be so inextricably interwoven with those of Saul, touching his harp, and singing, possibly,⁴

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures :
He leadeth me beside the still waters ;—

or,

O Lord, my God, in thee do I put my trust :
Save me from all them that pursue me, and deliver me :
Lest he tear my soul like a lion,
Rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.

At the sound of that fresh young voice, breathing out the accents of such confident trust in God, the smile returns to the king's face, and cheer to his heart. It soon appears that the singer is a necessity in the court, and David is established as court minstrel, being summoned from Bethlehem at each recurrence of Saul's malady to charm away the madness.

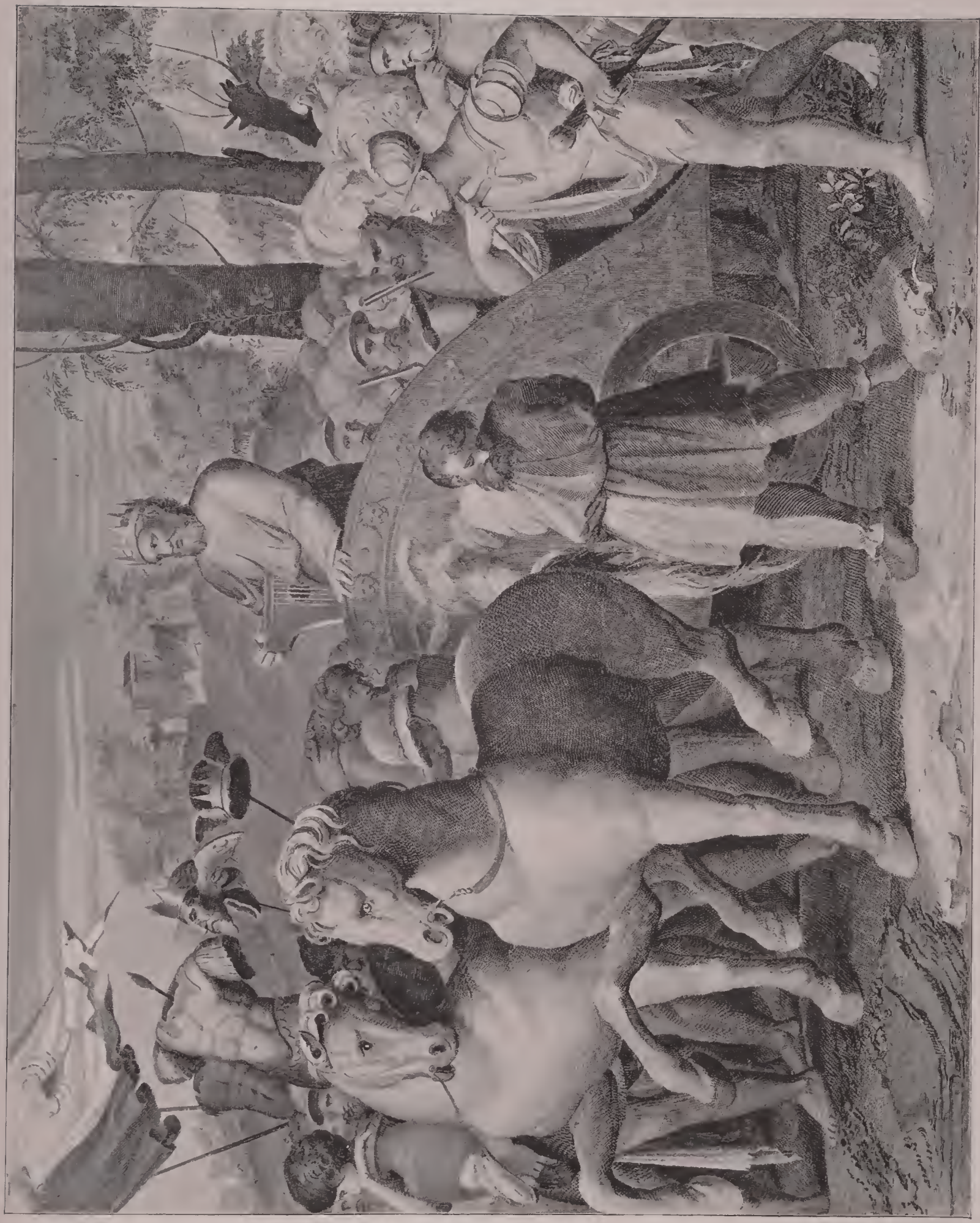
But once more the blast of the war horn is heard in the land, for the Philistines are pressing up the hill passes, and presently take the field with a strong force, marching up the Wady of Elah, or "The Terebinth," and camping at a place called Ephes Dammin—"The End of

¹ I. Samuel xvi, 14.

² Boswell's "Johnson," p. 277.

³ I. Samuel xvi, 18, Revision in margin.

⁴ The Seventh and Twenty-third Psalms are among those assigned by critics to the earliest period of David's muse.



TRIUMPH OF DAVID.

Bloodshed." At this point the plain, which to the east and west is almost a mile between the hills, narrows by the jutting out of rounded knobs or crags from the northern side to a space of about a quarter of a mile in breadth, while through the plain runs a deep channel cut by the winter torrents, which Major Conder describes as of some twenty feet wide, and about twelve feet deep, its sides strewn with pebbles rounded by the action of primeval waters.

The Philistines post themselves on the hills to the south, while Saul takes position with his regular force of 3,000, and such volunteers as he can muster, on the crags to the north of the valley. Here, though the hostile armies face each other across the plain, there is constant provocation on the part of the enemy, but no fighting. The Philistines have put forward a champion, Goliath by name, a descendant of the old Anakim, whose reputation had filled the Israelites with such superstitious terror. This giant advances daily, uttering taunts of cowardice, and challenging the command of Saul to provide a champion to meet him in single combat, and so settle the issues of the war. Tradition has preserved the story of the completeness of his martial array—his gleaming helmet; his coat of mail, as heavy of itself as a common man; his brazen greaves, protecting his massive legs, and his mighty shield, carried by his esquire, or armor-bearer. His spear was like a weaver's beam, and the iron head upon it, a mass of metal weighing from seventeen to eighteen pounds. Crossing the torrent bed, and coming over the plain to the foot of the hills below the camp of Saul, he abuses the Hebrews, covering them and their parents with the coarsest insults. He boasts of his own deeds of prowess, asserting that he was the slayer of Hophni and Phineas, the two sons of Eli, and that his hand had captured the Sacred Ark.¹

The sight of the man fills the camp of Saul with dismay. The king offers princely rewards to anyone who will engage and slay the giant—freedom from military duty, exemption from taxation, great riches and one of his daughters for a wife—but the bravest of the host shrink from the encounter as courting inevitable death. And so the days glide on into weeks, with the daily challenge, and the deepening sense of humiliating helplessness burdening the heart of Saul.

While affairs are at this pass, Jesse sends David to the camp with food for his three elder brothers, who are among the soldiers. On arriving at the wagons, which are drawn up about the outer line as a barricade, he hears the war cry; and, leaving his provisions with the keeper of the wagon train, hurries to the front. There he hears the challenge of the champion, learns of the dread which he has inspired, and makes the quick decision to offer himself as the defender of the honor of Israel. The scoffs of Eliab, his elder brother, do not alter this determination. He knows his own weakness, but he trusts in God, who had delivered him from the lion and the bear, to deliver him out of the hand of the Philistine.

Saul offers him his own armor, but he wisely trusts rather to the weapons to which he has been used from childhood, and to the God of battles. The soldiers from the hilltop watch him anxiously as he descends to the plain, clad in his simple shepherd's garb, and armed only with his staff and his trusty sling. The Philistine was returning to his camp, and, having crossed the gully, was advancing over the level ground to the south, when the lad, who had descended into the torrent bed, and had chosen five smooth stones from the bank where they abound, comes up behind him, attracting his attention by shouts of defiance. The giant, glancing about and observing his insignificant adversary, disdains to compete with a child, who comes armed with a shepherd's stick, as if to fight with a dog, and reviles David by his gods.

Indeed, to all human seeming, it was a preposterously one-sided combat. Everything promised victory to the Philistine—his over-mastering muscular force, his military discipline and his long experience in war. And yet David's confidence was not ill-grounded. In ancient warfare the sling was a formidable weapon, and the men of Benjamin were so trained from

¹ Chaldee Targum on I. Samuel iv, 11.

childhood, as to sling stones at an hair's breadth and not miss;¹ and David, who had used the weapon first as a toy, and afterward as a defense from the wild beast, was as expert as they. With his sling he could fight at long range, while his adversary must be out of action till he could close with his lighter antagonist; and this the youth's superior agility could altogether forbid.

Confiding thus in himself and in the God of Israel, the lad runs swiftly toward his foe, meanwhile fitting a stone to the sling. Still running, as the giant turns to come to closer action, he hurls the missile, which, grazing the edge of Goliath's helmet, smites him full in the forehead, and fells him, stunned, to the ground. Seizing the ponderous sword of his victim, David strikes off the champion's head.

Overcome with terror at this unexpected catastrophe, the bands of the Philistines flee in disorder, Saul pursuing them with great slaughter to the fenced cities of Ekron and Gath. Josephus, summing up the loss of the enemy on this eventful day, puts it as 30,000 killed, with double that number wounded.²

The Septuagint Bible has a psalm at the end of the Psalter, which David may have composed at this time. It purports to be of his own writing, and outside the number; when he fought the single combat with Goliath.

"I was small among my brethren, and the youngest in my father's house.

I was feeding my father's sheep.

My hands made a harp, and my fingers fitted a psaltery.

And who shall tell it to my Lord?

He is the Lord, he heareth.

He sent his messenger, and took me from my father's flocks, and anointed me with the oil of his anointing.

My brethren were beautiful and tall, but the Lord was not well pleased with them.

I went out to meet the Philistine, and he cursed me by his idols;

But I drew his own sword and beheaded him, and took away the reproach from the Children of Israel."

If fortunate for Israel, the killing of Goliath was no less fortunate for David, as it elevated him at a bound as the national hero. He had freed his country from a dreaded foe, and had also attempted the impossible with splendid courage, and had succeeded triumphantly. At once he is received into the tent of Saul, where Jonathan, who is now returned, embraces him. Taking off his own mantle, sword and girdle, the generous hearted prince presents them with his bow to David as a mark of special favor. From that instant there sprang up the most delightful companionship between Jonathan and the young man, whom Saul first made armor-bearer, and soon captain of a thousand, and then commander of his bodyguard. Both were true hearted, noble in spirit, and young. They were sufficiently unlike, so that each could help the other, and yet they were like enough to love. In all the vicissitudes that followed, their compact of friendship held sacredly. Even when Jonathan finally realized that David must ultimately take his place as successor of Saul, he does not alter his allegiance to his friend. Renan has said, referring to John the Baptist, that "Youth is capable of any sacrifice," but here much more than youth was involved. It was a question between a throne and a soul's honor, and it will be remembered to Jonathan's favor that he held his pledge to David inviolate. In the beautiful words of Scripture, "And it came to pass . . . that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul."³

The great victory, however, does not relieve the mind of Saul, but rather gives him fresh occasion for suspicions and forebodings. He cannot make allowance for the enthusiasms of the triumph, and, when the women at the villages meet the returning soldiers with the joyful shout, "Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands," he is consumed with burning

¹ Judges xx, 16.

² Josephus, "Antiquities," VI, ix, 5.

³ I. Samuel xviii, 1.

jealousy. At last he has found the man, who may grow into a possible rival. For a season he conceals the bitterness of his envy and seats David at his own table. He grants him many kindnesses, and, when the darker mood strikes him, suffers the minstrel to take his harp and drive the shadows from his brow as before with a song. But Saul's madness eats its way into his heart like smothered fire, to burst forth presently in raging fury. Fingering his javelin one day as David is singing, he suddenly lifts it for a cast, to pin the harper to the wall. By a quick turn David escapes the thrust, and at once leaves the place.

The open assault failing, the king in his gloomy hatred lays hidden schemes to ensnare his servant, whose chief offense is that he is grown too popular. He promises him Merab, his daughter, to wife; but in the hope that he may be slain in the venture, he demands as dowry proofs that he has slain an hundred Philistines, setting for the matter a narrow time limit. Not hesitating more than Jacob to win his bride a second time, he sallies forth with his men, to return before the expiration of the time with double the number required. On claiming the princess, David learns that Saul has treacherously married her to another, no doubt with the design of stirring up strife between the men, and so of disposing of David indirectly. However the young courtier may feel respecting the breach of royal honor, he is wise enough to hold his peace, and soon Saul in a manner redeems his pledge by giving him Michal, a younger daughter, who from the moment that David came to Gibeah from the battle has been passionately enamored with him.

Married to Michal, who proves a most devoted wife, and with Jonathan to watch for his interests with faithful eye, he baffles all the plots that are laid against him. Then once more the wrath of Saul, all the more desperate because so often defeated, bursts forth in open violence. This time the javelin, hurled with all the force of the royal hand, barely grazes its intended mark, and stands quivering in the wall, while David slips away to his house on the battlements.

There Michal brings him tidings that the king is fixed in purpose to kill him, as watchers have been set before the house, with orders to slay him as he comes forth in the morning. Perceiving that he can no longer trust himself at the court, he resolves to escape; and so, like the Apostle of the Gentiles at Damascus, he is let down over the wall by night, and hastens away to Samuel at Ramah.

When Saul learns that he is at Ramah, he sends men to apprehend him, without regard for the sacredness of the ancient Sanctuary. But they also are prevented from doing the fugitive harm, for when they approach the town and hear the song of the prophets, they join in the chant and forget the king's commission. After having despatched a second, and then a third band, to whom the same thing occurs, Saul takes the affair into his own hands. But on coming to the cluster of huts, where the young prophets are housed, the spirit of God descends upon him. He, too, forgets his bloody errand and joins in the weird chant before Samuel. In his frenzied excitement, he tears off his outer robe, and ends by falling into a trance, in which state he lies through the day and the night following; and so, for a second time, Saul is found among the prophets.

After his recovery the king returns to Gibeah, balked of his prey, and seemingly in a quieter mood; but David is convinced that, unless Saul be really his friend, he must not imperil the safety of the prophets by bidding under their protection. He, therefore, makes a secret visit to Jonathan, who is only too willing to engage to fathom his father's purpose.

In this the prince royal has not long to wait, for Saul's furious disposition soon unmasks itself. A solemn religious feast was held on the day of the new moon, at which all the king's household were expected to be present. On assembling, Saul marks the absence of David, and passes it in silence. The second day, the place being still vacant, Saul makes inquiry for the captain of his guard; and when Jonathan offers excuse for his friend the king breaks out into the wildest invective against the prince. He declares his son to be in conspiracy against him,

and lifting his javelin hurls it at him with all his force. Barely escaping the missile, Jonathan hastens from the board, and meets his friend at their trysting place, near the pile of stones that went by the name of Esel. Here the two mingle their tears and vows, pledging each other once more their fealty in the name of the Lord, for themselves and their children forever. And so they part, friends still, whatever their fortunes; and holding each other, though separate, in the tenderest remembrance.

CHAPTER IV.

SAUL'S LATER YEARS AND DEATH.

YEARS now pass while David lives in a condition of outlawry. As he has no refuge in Israel, he first finds protection with Achish, king of Gath; having previously visited the Tabernacle at Nob and secured the sword of Goliath, which had been placed there as a trophy. But when the attendants of Achish discover his identity, he finds that his life is again in peril. Remembering, however, the superstitious veneration of the Oriental for the deranged, which, strangely enough, is shared by the North American Indian, he feigns madness, and so makes his home for a time among his former enemies.

On learning at length that he has friends about his old home, he returns to Judea, and conceals himself in the Cave of Adullam, in the limestone region near Bethlehem. Here he is joined by his family, and by others like himself, who were in fear of Saul. Among these are the three sons of Zeruiah, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel, men of might, who were to become famous captains in David's long series of wars.

At the head of such a body of fierce and determined men it was easy to maintain himself by forays on the Philistine crops and villagers, and by the contributions of supplies which neighboring Israelites were glad to bring in return for protection from the common enemy. When, however, his band had grown too great, and the pursuit of Saul had become too hot for him to continue in these familiar haunts, he retired successively to the neighborhood of Engedi, that bright spot, which has remained in all its pristine freshness on the desolate border of the Dead Sea; to the thicket of Hareth, in the hill country of Judea; and to the wilderness of Ziph, which, some four miles below Hebron, though now bare and desolate, was then well wooded and offered a place of temporary refuge.

It was while David was at Adullam that we meet that beautiful incident of the well at Bethlehem. The time was the harvesting, and a body of Philistines was encamped in the Vale of the Giants. One day the chieftain expressed a wish for a draught of water from the well near the gate of his native village. This water was of such repute that later Solomon carried it by a conduit, constructed at immense expense, into his capital. Such was the devotion of his men that David's slightest wish was law. At the imminent risk of their lives, the three mightiest of the band, Abishai at the head, broke through the ranks of the enemy, and returned with the water which they had drawn.¹ But David could not take the draught, won at such price, and,

¹ II. Samuel xxiii, 13-17; I. Chronicles xi, 15-22.

with magnanimity that was princely in its recognition of noble service, poured the precious water on the ground, as an offering to the Lord.

“With deep emotion David took
 From their red hands the cup,
 Cast on its stains a shuddering look,
 And held it heavenward up.
 ‘I prize your boon,’ exclaimed the king,
 ‘But dare not taste the draught you bring.’
 ‘To heaven the glorious spoil is due,
 And his the offering be,
 Whose arm has borne you safely through,
 My brave, but reckless three!’”

So Henry Francis Lyte sweetly relates the tale and makes it the allegory of another Bethlehem, and a well of living water, with no foe to bar the yearning soul.

“Oh, did we thirst as David then,
 For this diviner spring,
 Had we the zeal of David’s men
 To please a higher king,
 What precious draughts we there might drain,
 What holy triumphs daily gain.”

Meanwhile the fury of Saul grows more relentless, as he has no minstrel hand to touch the harp, and as David still keeps beyond the reach of his arm. On learning that the fugitive had visited the High Priest Ahimelech, in the Tabernacle at Nob, and had received assistance, he summoned him and his priests, eighty-five in all, to Gibeah, where he charged them with conspiring against his kingdom. Their protests that they had known David as Saul’s faithful servant are not accepted, and he bade his guardsmen slay them all. They are shocked at thought of such a monstrous deed and act of audacious sacrilege, and refuse to touch the Lord’s anointed. But Doeg, the Idumean hireling, who had no regard for the religious traditions of Israel, and scrupled at nothing in subservience to the king, drew his sword, and calling his men, cut them down. As if this were not sufficient to fill the measure of iniquity to the brim, he hastened to Nob, and there put to death every living thing—men, women, children, and cattle; thus in one fell swoop almost blotting the race of Ithamar from the face of the earth. Eder-
 sheim draws a parallel in his “Bible History” between the massacre at Nob, and that of the children at Bethlehem, Herod the Great having been, like Doeg, an Idumean by descent.¹ One only, Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, escapes to David, bearing the sacred ephod. Thus through the dark sin of Saul, David is given a recognized priest, and henceforth possesses the dignity arising from opportunity to consult the Holy Oracle.

In this world evil works seldom go singly, and the slaughter of the priests at Nob impels the king to undertake another crime of malignant atrocity. He has broken with the priests as well as with the prophets, and yet he has prevailed on Zadok, the son of Ahitub, to serve as his priest, and so makes for him a Sanctuary. But no priest could serve at Nob after it had been defiled by such ruthless slaughter of his caste, and some other site must be provided. In this exigency Saul’s mind turns to the Gibeonites, who were holding an eminence some three or four miles to the north of Nob. This people were Hivites, whose fathers had made a covenant with Israel at the time of the invasion under Joshua. Regardless of this sacred compact, the king sends Doeg, his red right hand, to clear the ground for the new Sanctuary by seizure of the lands of the Gibeonites and their allied villages, and with orders to put out of the way any

¹ Eder-
 sheim, “Bible History,” IV, p. 120.

attempting to resist the mandate. Like many another misdoing, it returned in the fullness of time to plague the inventor's posterity.¹

But all this while Saul is swift in his pursuit of David, whom he hunts, in the other's graphic phrase, "as one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains." Nothing in history more forcibly illustrates the wretched blindness of ill-tempered hatred. The rancorous passion of Saul stands out all the more darkly because of the gentle loyalty and merciful magnanimity of David, who, repeatedly, when he holds the king's life in his hands, will not lift a finger against the Lord's anointed. Once, while Saul is following him in the region of Engedi, and the rocks are covered with the king's men, Saul enters a gloomy cave alone, where David and his men are hiding. The fugitive has the ruler of the nation at his mercy, and his men urge him to seize the providential opportunity to bring termination to his life of danger. But his heart cleaves to Saul, and he cannot act the part of a traitor. Silently he creeps up in the darkness and cuts off a bit of the king's mantle with his dagger as a witness that he has been more merciful than Saul. Presently, on Saul's retiring, he comes forth on the hillside, and, showing the piece of the king's skirt, bids Saul judge of his innocence of evil purpose, since he has not harmed him, when he was so wholly in his power. The king is touched by this evidence of generosity, of which he knows that he himself would have been incapable, and with tears he confesses that his son David is the more righteous man. Granting that the kingdom is to be established in the hand of his vassal, he begs him to swear not to cut off his children after him, or destroy his name from his father's house.²

If for a moment Saul's better nature triumphed, the rising fortunes of David, whose band is constantly augmenting, stir his jealousy afresh, and he again takes the field with a large force, which is under direct command of Abner. They follow David to the Negeb, the south country, and are there posted in a regular camp. Thither, in the dead of night, David enters with Abishai, and, stooping over the sleeping king, they carry away the heavy spear, which was always with him, and the cruse of water from his side, returning after their perilous exploit to the other side of the deep ravine. In the morning David calls to Abner from the hilltop, a great way off, and reproaches him for not having guarded the king's person better, and once more shows Saul how he had held his lord's life precious. And so again Saul confesses his folly, and withdraws his army, promising to do his servant no harm.

From these incidents we read the simple sincerity of David's character as in an open book. He is to be king, for God has called him to the throne; but he will not hasten the moment of his accession by a single overt act. At any time he could have kindled the blaze of civil war, but he would not do such wrong to his king or to his Lord, and is content merely with protecting his life against secret plot and open violence. From first to last, though Saul pursues him with relentless fury, he is the loyal subject, his heart full of love to his sovereign. We feel that Browning fits the truth of David's purpose, when he makes him say, in *Saul*:

"See the king—I would help him but cannot, the wishes fall through,
Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow poor to enrich,
To fill up his life, I would—knowing which,
I know that my service is perfect."

While David is in the wilderness of Ziph he has his last tender meeting with Jonathan, who comes to comfort him and to assure him that he will be king after Saul. With a generosity that we may name princely, though princes seldom possess the like, he is glad of the prospective elevation of his friend, and will be content to be next after him, whom he knows to be the stronger man.

Two other events mark this period; the death of the aged Samuel, for whom all Israel mourns, and who is buried as an especial honor within the limits of Ramah; and David's

¹ II. Samuel xxi, 1-5.

² I. Samuel xxiv.

espousal of Abigail, widow of the rich Nabal. Though this marriage proves the rise of our fugitive's fortunes, it is also the beginning of many miseries, which are inseparable from the polygamous relation, even in countries where it has the sanction of established custom.

But now David's life takes on a new phase. He cannot remain on unfriendly terms with both Saul and the Philistines, or he will be ultimately crushed as between the upper and the nether millstones. Saul has discarded his friendship, and so he is driven to make terms with Achish, king of Gath, resolving in his inmost soul to do no harm to the king of Israel, whose authority he has always scrupulously acknowledged. Achish receives him kindly and assigns him a city — Ziglag, a border town to the south, on the edge of the desert. Hither he leads his band, now grown to 600 strong, and occupies himself in repelling the Amalekites and other pillagers, who have been making too free with the frontier villages of Judea.

For nearly a year and a half he pursues this life, when he is summoned to join the Philistines in a great movement on the territories of Saul. It is their plan to follow the caravan road northward, till it turns across the extensive plain of Esdraelon; for they realize that they can employ their war chariots to better advantage in the open country than in the tortuous defiles of the hills, where they have suffered so many disastrous defeats.

It is an indication of the shrewdness of David's character that his conduct at Ziglag has won the confidence of Achish so far that he offers him command of his bodyguard; but so fixed is his determination not to injure Saul, that, while he responds to the summons to join the Philistines, he keeps well to the rear of their army. It may have been his persistence in this course which aroused the suspicions of the lords of the Philistines. Recalling the fame of his former exploits while contending with them, they angrily demand of Achish that he send this ally of his away, lest he turn against them in the battle.

Receiving gladly his dismissal, which Achish was reluctant to give, he returns to Ziglag to find that his town has been plundered by a band of Amalekites, and that all the women and children have been captured and carried into the desert. The joy of the return is converted into lamentation, until Abiathar, the high priest, assures them from the Lord that the effort at rescue will be successful. No time is lost in organizing the pursuit. On the third day the marauders are overtaken, surprised and defeated. All the women, children, and cattle are recovered, and the vast possessions of the Amalekites fall into the hands of David. The store of booty is so great, after rewarding his own men for their valor, that David is still able to distribute rich presents to the towns which have been befriending him in his season of adversity.

Meanwhile momentous events have been occurring in the north. On hearing of the preparations of the Philistines, Saul had hurriedly raised an army and taken a position to the east of the great plain, near Mount Gilboa. But his men have neither the equipment nor the discipline of the enemy, and the chances of battle are ominous. And yet, had the king in this crisis been valiant and confident, he might have taken the foe by surprise, and overcome him by the suddenness of the blow. But with Saul all the buoyancy of life is past. As the hour of conflict approaches, his spirit grows heavy, and he is as one whose cause is already lost. In his distress he calls upon God, whom he has defied; but God does not reply. There is no assurance by dream, by Urim, nor by voice of prophet. Having forfeited the benefits of communion with God, as with others in like case, he has recourse to the arts of superstition.

To the north of Little Hermon, close by the place where the Philistines had stationed their camp, was the spring of Dor. Here dwelt a woman, a pretender to occult science, who braved the law by consulting with a familiar spirit, the penalty of which was death. In his later years Saul had enforced this law vigorously, and Jewish tradition accounts for the preservation of the woman amid the extermination of her kind, by representing her as the mother of Abner. There seems, however, no foundation for connecting Saul's chief captain with this feminine

outlaw. Disguising himself, and accompanied by two of his servants, whom the tradition represents as Abner and Amasa, the king visits the woman in the dead of night. He pledges her that she shall suffer no harm and asks that she call up the shade of Samuel. Archbishop Trench has remarked on the depth of Saul's despair, who, when forsaken of God, "seeks to move hell, since heaven is inexorable to him."

In our ignorance of the unseen world we do best, in the dark transactions that follow, to accept the record as it stands. In the dim light of the narrow hut, assisted, perhaps, by a crude ventriloquism, the woman begins her incantations, and calls upon Samuel to return from the dead. At the summons, to her own consternation, for she shrieks at what she beholds, there rises the apparition of an aged man, wrapped in a mantle. It is Samuel, who once more pronounces the doom of the king, and declares that on the morrow he and his sons shall be slain by the Philistines. At this confirmation of his forebodings, the king, who has taken no food all day, is overcome with sudden faintness and measures his giant length on the earthen floor. It is a pitiful sight—the prostrate king, discarded of God, and reduced in his sore trouble to depend on the ministrations of the outlawed woman.

Yet all this is a fitting prelude to the disasters of the morning. For in the great battle, which rages all day long, the Philistines are everywhere successful. The light forces of the Hebrews melt away before the weight of their onset, and at last the remnant takes to flight. Saul, having been wounded by the archers, stands near a ghastly pile of the slain, Jonathan and two others of his sons being among them. It is the close of day, and the shadows of death are gathering upon him. The triumph of the foe cannot be hindered. He calls upon his armor-bearer to slay him, lest the enemy make mock of him; but the man refuses. Wearied, bleeding, desperate, he turns his sword against himself and falls upon it, and so dies by his own hand. There the Philistines find his body, conspicuous by its vast stature and the kingly diadem upon the helmet. In the fierce barbarity of the time they take vengeance on the poor relic of humanity, and nail it up, along with the bodies of his sons, on the walls of Beth-shan.

But here a gleam of light falls athwart the gloomy story. For the men of Jabesh, grateful to Saul for the delivery of their city forty years before, come by night and carry away the grim memorials of departed greatness, to burn them at Jabesh, and bury the ashes under the boughs of a spreading tree.

And so the long agony of Saul had its end. Raised up of God to save the nation from their enemies, he had involved them in his own ruin by his great disobedience. The willful king became the misanthrope, the madman, the suicide. And the last state of the land was far worse than the first. The Philistines have control of the great caravan route, and of the rich plain of Esdraelon; and push their outposts to the southward, no one hindering. For Abner, who is still faithful to the house of Saul, after the sacrifice of the flower of the host at Gilboa, dares not withstand the foe and retires across the Jordan with the remnant left him, to take refuge in the land of Gilead.

Two days after David's return to Ziklag from pursuing the robbers, a messenger from the north, with the air of one bearing good tidings, reports the disaster of Gilboa, and the death of Saul and his sons. Not comprehending the magnanimity of the chieftain, and not thinking that he would regard the lifting a hand against the Lord's anointed as the gravest of crimes, he foolishly claims to have been the slayer of Saul, and shows in proof the royal diadem and the bracelet from the king's arm. Convicted out of his own mouth, he suffers the extreme penalty on the spot; David, in the intensity of his grief not pausing to sift truth from fiction in the story.

And so David and his men mourn for Saul, rending their garments and spending the day in the bitterness of lamentation. The sincerity of this sorrow appears in the touch of genuine

emotion that thrills in the beautiful dirge, which David composes, and which, under the name of *The Song of the Bow*, was taught to the children of Judea, and recited at every fireside. How he laments the calamity of Israel!¹

“Thy glory, O Israel, is slain upon the high places!
How are the mighty fallen!”

He alludes to the inseparableness of the king and the prince on his right hand;—

“Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided.”

And then his soul turns most of all to his one dear friend;—

“I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me:
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.”

Songs like this are not made to order. They must live first in the heart, and be fashioned in the mold of some great soul-struggle, and so become the real expression of a real experience.

CHAPTER V.

DAVID AS KING OF HEBRON AND JERUSALEM.

DAVID'S period of mourning having ended, he is free at last to drop the rôle of a guerrilla chieftain and assume the rights and prerogatives of a king. As was naturally the case, he first turned to his own tribe, that of Judah, which from this time becomes more prominent in history. During the recent troubles he had given it his powerful protection, and it was the only part of Palestine not overrun by the Philistines.

In the important matter of taking the throne, David, whose constant submission to the divine guidance stands in sharpest contrast with the willfulness of Saul, inquires of the Lord if he shall go up into any of the cities of Judea. In answer, he is bidden to go up to Hebron, the capital town of Judea, and the earliest seat of civilized life in Palestine.² Here he is welcomed by the elders of Judea, who soon secure him an election as king to their tribe by popular vote, confirming their action by a public ceremony of anointing.

For the present he accepts his position as king of Judea, realizing that his recent connection with Achish of Gath must render him an object of suspicion with the rest of the Hebrews, and, with statesmanlike sagacity, not breaking at once with his allies of the plains, which would have precipitated him into a foreign war.

Meanwhile Abner, who has withdrawn to the east of the Jordan, stations himself at the ancient Sanctuary of Mahanaim, near the place where Jacob wrestled with the angel, and proclaims Ishbosheth, a younger son of Saul, as king over Gilead, and such portions of Israel as he is able to wrest piece by piece from the Philistines.

And so there is presently war between David and Abner's “Shadow King”; David's power augmenting, Ishbosheth's declining. The subtlety of David's policy at this period is masterly.

¹ II. Samuel i, 18.

² Stanley, “Sinai and Palestine,” p. 164.

He still holds friendly relations with Achish, and so the Philistines view his struggle with Abner complacently. As Abner advances his outposts, driving the Philistines before him and taking possession of the plain of Esdraelon, the heights of Ephraim, and the villages of Benjamin, David advances northward, seizing portions of Dan, and at length capturing Mizpeh and Gibeon, which Saul had made his Sanctuary after the massacre of the priests at Nob.

Events now follow thick and fast. The armies of Abner and of Joab, David's chief captain, are in camp before the pool of Gibeon. Abner proposes that the issues of the rival houses be put to the decision of combat between the young men. Twelve men of Benjamin, and twelve of the host of David, meet in the open space, as the Horatii and the Curatii afterward contend for the rival claims of Rome and Alba. So equally matched are they that at the first onset each of each twelve slays his foeman, and all fall together. A general engagement follows, in which Abner's men are defeated and put to flight. In the pursuit, Asahel, Joab's youngest brother, a passionate love for whom seems the one redeeming trait of that fierce warrior's heart, attaches himself to Abner. It is recklessness for the stripling to seek combat with the experienced chief. Abner warns him to return from following him, and at length, when he will not desist, drives the sharpened butt of his spear backward as they run, with so vicious a thrust as to pierce the lad through. It was an act for which Joab never made allowance, and the memory of which he nursed till time afforded the chance to wipe out the stain in Abner's blood.

The defeat of the army of the north is not so crushing but that hostilities continue in a feeble way. The people are weary of the weakness of Ishbosheth, and many in the northern tribes are evidently turning toward David. Abner himself feels that David's star is in the ascendant, and secretly wishes to make terms with him. An altercation with Ishbosheth over Rizpah, Saul's concubine, affords him a pretext for breaking with his master, and in an outburst of passion he declares that he will translate the kingdom from the house of Saul and set up David's kingdom from Dan to Beersheba. Immediately he opens negotiations with David, sends him Michal, Saul's daughter and David's first wife, who had been separated from her husband by the vicissitudes of his career and had been living at Mahanaim, and arranges to gather a league of all Israel to acknowledge him as king. Hardly, however, is he gone from David's presence, when Joab returns from an expedition to learn that Abner is about entering the king's service. Inflamed by envy, lest the accession of so great a captain may endanger his own position near the king's person, and burning with hatred for the killing of his brother Asahel, he performs one of those acts which so frequently stain the pages of ancient history. Sending a swift messenger he recalls Abner, possibly in David's name, but certainly without his knowledge, and, when he is come, leads him aside as if to speak with him on some matter of importance. Then, when he has so far gained his rival's confidence that he has him off his guard, he stabs him to the heart.

It is one of the sorrowful experiences of David, so many of which fall to his lot through the sins of his household. His nephew may be rebuked, but is too powerful to be punished. It was not the first time, nor the last, that a ruler has been forced to temporize with a too powerful subject. How the pain of it went to David's soul we may infer from his pathetic exclamation, "These men, the sons of Zeruiah, be too hard for me."¹

The shock to Israel from Abner's assassination was profound. The slaying of a man of high station, as we have found in the taking off of two of the presidents of our own republic, and as France has learned still more recently in her loss of Sadi-Carnot, confuses the public mind, not only because of the suddenness of the blow, but even more from dread of the dark possibilities that lurk behind. To discover that such deeds can be attributed to private rage or to personal malevolence, and not to a wide-spread conspiracy against the public weal, is a relief. When, as soon was the case, it was understood that David was not concerned in what would

¹ II. Samuel iii, 39.

have been a serious breach of kingly faith, and that the responsibility of the affair lay wholly with Joab, the nation breathed more freely.

But the loss of Abner was fatal to the stability of Ishbosheth's throne. He had now no strong warrior, no prudent counselor. It was the general conviction that his sway was merely from day to day. What would soon have been settled by time was hastened by the cupidity of two captains in his army — Baanah and Rechab — probably of the old Canaanitish stock, and from the Gibeonitish city of Beeroth, who steal into Ishbosheth's chamber. There, as he is taking rest in the heat of the day, they murder him in his couch and then hasten to Hebron, carrying the head of their royal victim as a testimony to David that he need no longer fear his rival. But they have mistaken quite the character of the king. He offers no thanks. He bestows no royal grants or high positions of state. As he had bidden the young men slay the Amalekite, who had presumed to think him glad for the death of Saul, so now he bids them smite these Gibeonites for assassinating Saul's last surviving son.

Seventeen years have thus passed since Samuel secretly anointed the young man David, in Bethlehem, and seven and a half since the latter began to rule in Hebron. Now the path is clear for the wider sovereignty. All things come to him who waits, and he has waited the Lord's time with exemplary patience. With Abner and Ishbosheth in the tomb, the eyes of all turn toward David as their natural defender. The long wars with the Philistines have served one good purpose in quelling the jealousies of the tribes. They have found a common unity while repelling a common enemy. The tedious struggle has been justly likened by Wellhausen to a "forge, in which the kingdom of Israel was welded into one."¹ Burying all their past differences, the elders of the tribes assemble at Hebron and offer the national crown to David. And yet they are careful to grant it with restrictions. They have been taught, through their experience with Saul, the dangers of irresponsible power, and so they prepare a solemn league and covenant, which reminds us of the Declaration of Rights agreed to by William of Orange and the English Parliament at the Revolution;² and, when David has consented to its terms, they anoint him king over Israel.

If any fears of his purposes have been entertained, all are dismissed in the general joy of a united nation. They recount his early services, when he commanded the host in the days of Saul, and how the Lord had appointed him a shepherd and a captain of the people.³ Immediately the best elements of the country rally at his side. He has long enjoyed the confidence and help of Abiathar, the high priest; and he is now joined by Jehoiada, the high priest of the line of Eleazar, and by Zadok, the future high priest of Solomon, who bring him 4,600 of the sons of Levi. He had attended the school of the prophets at Ramah, when a lad, and had always possessed their sympathy. The Prophet Gad had been with him for several years, and from this time forward he has Nathan, also, who is, in a way, the successor of Samuel, as a ready friend and counselor.

The inauguration of the new king was observed with a great feast, lasting for three days; the people from all parts of the kingdom freely sending their offerings for the great rejoicing. The chronicler, who tells of the bread, and figs, and raisins, and wine, and oil, and sheep, which poured in from distant Issachar, and Zebulun, and Naphtali, adds his significant comment, "for there was joy in Israel."⁴

Confirmed thus as sovereign by the willing suffrages of the people, David at once redeems their best expectations by adopting lines of policy which reveal his farsighted statesmanship, and the sincerity of his devotion to his country as a whole. Up to this time there had been no national capital. Each tribe had its own chief city, whose interests it promoted without regard to other centers. And there had been no opportunity for the affections of the people to cling

¹ "History of Israel," p. 453.

² Green, "History of English People," IV, p. 35.

³ II. Samuel v, 2.

⁴ I. Chronicles xii, 40.



DAVID ROBERTS.

THE TOWER OF DAVID.

to the Tabernacle, for that sacred tent had been shifted from place to place, according to the exigencies of the occasion. As Prince of Judea, David might have held fast to Hebron, which occupied a commanding position, and was associated with the most sacred memories. Such a course, however, would have tended to give to the established residents of Hebron too great a prominence in the affairs of the kingdom, and to awaken a spirit of envy in the other tribes. Consequently, the king wisely resolves to found a new capital, one against which no prejudices may lie.

Eighteen miles to the north of Hebron, just over the border from Judea, stood the ancient citadel of Jebus, a rocky fastness, held by a band of Canaanites who had never been subdued. Deep gorges—the beds of torrents that had rushed down these declivities beyond the memory of the oldest dweller in the land—lay to the east and west, their precipitous sides forming a natural defense, as the hill on which the fortress was built rose some five hundred feet¹ above the bed of the valley. To the north stretched out an extensive plain, and here a wall had been erected as a sufficient protection. The inhabitants regarded their situation so impregnable that the blind and lame could defend it.

David resolves to make this place the chief seat of his kingdom. For this it presented many advantages. Since it lay actually in the territory of Benjamin, to select it for the seat of government would be taken as a concession to the northern tribes. If not in the geographical center of the country, it was on the great highway from the coast to the Jordan, and was easily accessible from all parts of the nation. The plain at the north would furnish ample space for the future growth of the city, while the precipitous hillsides, in which the Jebusites entertained such confidence, promised a secure residence, when once the place was in his own possession.

With such a prize in sight, David acts with promptitude. As a statesman he recognizes the strategic value of a great victory at the outset of his wider administration; and, as a warrior, he sees that the hour to strike is when his armies are assembled. Since the enterprise was extra hazardous, he stimulated the ambition of his men by promising the highest post in the kingdom, the captaincy of the host, to whomsoever should first scale the wall and smite the Jebusites. The question has been raised whether some dark thought crossed the king's mind, as to what might befall the most venturesome man in the army,² and so the harsh yoke of the sons of Zeruiah be broken, but to this obviously no answer can be given. A more probable reflection would seem to be that of the chances offering for some other to mount the wall before Joab, and so relieve the sovereign from making the appointment, on which otherwise Joab would be certain to insist. Be this, however, as it may, the fortune of war rendered the position of the fierce Joab more secure than ever, for, selecting the southwest exposure, which was the steepest and least fortified, he pressed to the summit and so won the honors of the day.

To the king's credit, he tempers the capture of Jebus with mercy; and, though he takes the site of the city for distribution among his retainers, he spares the lives of his captives and furnishes them lands for residence. Not long afterward we notice the deposed Jebusite king, still a chieftain, holding a tract just without the city wall.³

Directly after gaining this important stronghold, David moves his seat of government from Hebron, changing the old name Jebus to Jerusalem, the Place of Peace. For the first time the town enters the field of history,⁴ where it is to hold a commanding influence through the centuries.

Like Rameses II. of Egypt, David is not only the successful warrior, but also the builder. He begins by fortifying his new capital so as to resist every hostile attack. He strengthens the Millo, the fortress taken from the Jebusites; and, instructed by his recent experience with the

¹ Conder, "Handbook," p. 329.

² Stanley, "Jewish Church," II, p. 88.

³ II. Samuel xxiv, 23, "Araunah, the king."

⁴ "Jebus . . . first receives historical importance from him (David)."—Wellhausen, "History of Israel," p. 453.

cliffs on the south and west, erects a strong wall, extending it till it compasses the entire circuit of his town. This wall, its foundations laid in cyclopean rocks, was enlarged and strengthened by David and Solomon, until, with its protruding buttresses, and frowning bastions, and its massive breadth and height, it became the Gibraltar of the kingdom, exciting the ecstasy of a later singer, who exclaims in the rapture of his admiration,

“Walk about Zion, and go round about her :
Tell the towers thereof.
Mark ye well her bulwarks.”

The new city is a hive of industry, with its swarms of workmen hurrying on the fortifications, or erecting new dwellings for the citizens. Not only is employment furnished thus for the soldiers, who in this manner are gradually tamed from the wild life they had indulged during the civil war, but also for foreign workmen. For now the king of Tyre coöperates with David, and sends him skilled carpenters and stonecutters, and great beams of cedar wood from Lebanon, bringing them in rafts to Joppa, whence they are dragged up the hills to their destination. The extensive palace which presently rises, fragrant with its scent of the cedar used in its finishing, and so commodious as to easily shelter the king's great household, marks the expansion of the monarchy, and the development of the idea of the nation. If Saul was the military commander wearing the name of king, but really having slight hold on the wrangling tribes, David, with his strong city, his settled habitation, and his standing army, was the sovereign, ruling his people by his power to enforce obedience, as well as by his hold upon their gratitude and affection.

These changes of organization, and the expanding consciousness of nationality are presently observed in Philistia. Nothing in the narrative suggests any breach of trust on the part of David toward his former suzerain at Gath. His relation with Achish had been more that of an independent ally than of a feudal vassal, and his rise to the kingship seems to have awakened no opposition from the Cities of the Plain. When, however, he takes command of Israel and fortifies his capital, there rise forebodings lest his budding power may become too great. As the confidence of the people in his ability to protect them increased, the Philistines must have found, little by little, the collection of their tribute from Upper and Central Palestine more difficult, until at length they perceived that their rich dependency was slipping from their grasp. We miss from the record any mention of remonstrances made to David, as well as of his replies, though doubtless protracted negotiations were carried on. When, finally, it becomes clear that expostulation is ineffective, the lords of the Philistines determine on war. Remembering David's martial prowess and how he had slain his ten thousands, they make vast preparations, and at length move up the hills with all their forces, the historian stating definitely that “all the Philistines came up to seek David.”¹ Conscious of the strength of his defenses, after placing a faithful guard in charge of the city, the king leads the army to the region of Adullam,² some six miles to the southeast of Bethlehem.

The Philistines, crowding up from the plain, presently arrive before Jerusalem, and set their camp in the Valley of the Giants, directly under the wall of Jerusalem, and in the very spot that it most pleased David to have them. The king waits patiently till he has inquired of the Lord and received the answer that God would deliver them into his hand, when he bursts upon them with that fierce charge which so often won the day for the Israelitish arms. In David's graphic speech, the rout was like the breaking of waters from a mountain lake. The swift torrent rush sweeps everything before it. The Philistines are driven with such headlong haste that they leave behind their idols, which they had brought in the hope of insuring their triumph, and which David, following the Law,³ destroys, burning them in the fire.⁴

¹ II. Samuel v, 17.

² So I understand II. Samuel v, 17, “And David went down to the hold.”

³ Deuteronomy vii, 5.

⁴ I. Chronicles xiv, 12.

The Philistines, realizing that Israel must be overcome at once, or that their grasp on the hill country must be abandoned, gather all their resources for a second attack; and, as soon as practicable, mass their army once more in the same Valley of the Giants, taking position close under the city wall.

Following much the same tactics as before, David assembles the main part of his army below Bethlehem. Still again, not following his own wisdom, but depending on the guidance of God, he consults the oracle as to his course. This time he is bidden not to go out in direct attack, but to come upon the foe by a flank movement from the rear, through the forest of *beca* trees. In the second battle the discomfiture of the enemy is even more complete than before, for they are driven out of the country, the pursuit continuing to the parting of the roads, on the edge of the Maritime Plain.

This was the last great struggle with Philistia. Some minor engagements were to follow, but the power of the Cities of the Plain was broken, and they were reduced to the humiliation of paying tribute to the land from which their own tax gatherers had so long insolently collected it. "David took the bridle of the Mother City out of the hands of the Philistines,"¹ for so the sacred writer explains the importance of the victory which made David master of Gath and all her dependencies.

CHAPTER VI.

DAVID'S RELIGIOUS SPIRIT, HIS PSALMS, AND HIS VICTORIES.

THE quick genius of David, even while he is engaged in defeating his enemies and consolidating his military power, perceives that for the full growth of the national spirit he must enlist the religious enthusiasm of his countrymen. To this end Jerusalem must be made not only the temporal, but even more, the spiritual capital, the abode of the national Sanctuary, the center of all pious hope and emotion. Doubtless in this great thought his own anxious longing for the house of God blended with his plans for the increase of the national glory, for David was always a devoutly religious man. He realized, with the insight of a God-fearing heart, that it is true righteousness which exalteth a nation, and that the best assurance of prosperity and happiness for his people lay in their dependence on the Almighty. But how could such a feeling of sacredness in the new city be best promoted? It possessed no such memories of the past as Ramah, the school of the prophets and the home of Samuel; nor as Bethel, where Jacob beheld his vision and heard the voice of the Lord; nor as Hebron, with its "Oak" of Mamre, where Abraham had sat in his tent door; and its Cave of Machpelah, where the dust of the fathers was enshrined.

But if Jerusalem lacked all this, new religious associations might be fostered, and the faith of the One Living and True God be nationalized in the Holy City. To effect this it would be necessary to bring the Sacred Ark from its halting place at Kirjath-jearim, on the outposts of Judea, where it had been deposited by the Philistines on their sending it back from Ashdod.

Having decided on the transfer of the Ark, the king constructs a new tabernacle on Mount Moriah, and arranges for bringing the Sacred Relic to Jerusalem with festivities of unexampled magnificence. A great convocation is summoned, which is attended by 30,000 representatives, many coming from the most distant parts of the realm. On the day appointed, the procession moves to the house of Abinadab, who had housed the Ark for several years, and there, the

¹ II. Samuel viii, 1 (Revised Version).

precious Memorial having been laden upon a cart drawn by oxen, the line starts upon the homeward journey with every expression of joy and thanksgiving. On the way, however, a sudden tempest rises, and Uzzah, one of the sons of Abinadab, is pierced by a lightning shaft, and falls dead upon the spot. An incident so ominous strikes dismay into the hearts of David and his people. Its occasion was attributed to the disregard of the Levitical requirements in the carriage of the Ark, for it should have been borne on the shoulders of Levites, all of whom were ceremonially clean. The placing of the Ark upon a cart, after the manner of the Philistines, and Uzzah's attempt to steady it with his hand were contrary to the ancient regulations of the Tabernacle.

Not daring to bear it farther, the king orders it to be deposited at the house of one Obed-edom, where it lay three months. It appearing after this time that the house of Obed-edom had not been injured for the Ark of God, but rather prospered, David decides to complete the work of transfer. On this occasion every requirement of the Law is fulfilled. None but Levites are suffered to approach the Ark, and they bear it with staves, as it had been carried in the Wilderness. As the line sets forth upon its march, the anxiety of David and his courtiers is intense; but when they have moved six stages (something near a mile), and nothing untoward has occurred, a halt is made and a great sacrifice is offered to the Lord. Then, amid the acclamations of the assembled thousands, it is again lifted. The weird cry goes up, as in the desert five centuries before,

“Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered.”¹

To this is now joined a new song, appropriate for the removing of the Ark,

“Arise, O Lord, into thy resting place,
Thou and the Ark of thy strength.
Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness;
And let thy saints shout for joy.”²

The chronicler gives an extended catalogue³ of the priests and dignitaries of the kingdom who participated in this celebration, which set the keynote of Jewish devotion at a high pitch, and the memory of which lingered long in the national heart. All manner of musical instruments in use at the time were heard, keeping time with the chant of the Levites; and the line of the sons of the prophets joined in the religious dances to which they had been trained. The most conspicuous figure of all, however, was the king himself, clad in the white ephod, as worn by the high priest, and dancing to the music of his harp before the Ark. Dean Stanley has called this the greatest day of David's life, as here he was the Conqueror,⁴ Poet, Musician, Priest, in one. The incident of Michal, who sees him from her window dancing as he convoys the symbol of Jehovah into the ancient habitation of heathenism, and presently reproaches him for so demeaning himself, has been termed unhappy; and yet may it not have served its part in bringing out the noble response of the king, who does not disdain to be the Lord's servant? If he had humbled himself, it was before the Lord, who had chosen him in preference to Saul, to make him prince over the people of the Lord.

It was on this festival day that good use was made of some of those admirable compositions, the psalms, the joy songs of the Church of God. Apparently the Twenty-fourth Psalm was composed for the triumphal march, as the Ark was borne toward the city. There is the call to the watchmen,

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors:
And the King of Glory shall come in.”

To this call the watchmen replied in challenge,

“Who is this King of Glory?”

¹ Psalm lxxviii, 1.

² Psalm cxxxii, 8, 9.

³ I. Chronicles xv.

⁴ Stanley, “Jewish Church,” II, p. 94.

And the waiting host in answer takes up the strain,

“The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle.”

And then all the singers, as the procession sweeps into the city, chant together,

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates ;
Yea, lift them up, ye everlasting doors :
And the King of Glory shall come in.
Who is this King of Glory ?
The Lord of hosts,
He is the King of Glory.”

And the chronicler, in his description of the proceedings of the day, records an extended psalm, which he states that David gave to Asaph, the chief of the singers, to give thanks unto the Lord. As we examine this beautiful praise poem,¹ we find it breathing the spirit of devout dependence upon God, and swelling with the emotions of a loyal heart, which feels that its highest work is to worship before the Creator.

Taking this Song of Consecration, we have a standard by which to measure the Psalms of David. For it is now well understood that the Psalter itself was the Temple Hymn Book, and that some of the songs were written by an early hand, while many were of later composition. Seventy-three are connected with the poet king by title, and even of these the critics are doubtful whether all can assuredly be attributed to him. Many of the one hundred and fifty, as we have them, contain allusions which show their later origin. On the score of references to the ritual service, and to the Temple, which did not exist in David's time, some psalms, which otherwise might be regarded as David's, are assigned to forgotten authors. Possibly the critics may be over rash in thus wresting the laurel from David's brow on the basis of a chance expression, since the allusion to the place of use may be accounted for very easily. It is not difficult to imagine the leader of the Temple choir employing an existing hymn, and inserting a line, or an allusion, better to adapt it for the immediate purpose. When we find the Psalm of Consecration,² which the chronicler declares to have been given by the king on the day of the festival, furnishing fragments which occur in six several psalms of the Temple collection, we perceive that the leaders of the choir understood in some measure the art of adaptation for the occasion.

Three psalms particularly, the fifteenth, the one hundred and first, and the one hundred and eighteenth, are outgrowths of David's delight in coming to his new home. Others, like the eighth, or the eighteenth, or the twenty-third, or the thirty-second, are clearly the expression of David's personal emotions ; the eighth, of his view of nature while watching the flocks by night ; the twenty-third, of his confidence in God, probably used on his introduction to Saul ; and the thirty-second, the vehicle of his penitential sorrow after his great sin. Comparing the titles, the local setting, and the peculiarities of diction in the entire collection, we may conclude that the king composed not far from half of those handed down to us, though we are to understand that he wrote other compositions that have not been preserved.

For the principle of the Temple collection, as Ewald has pointed out, was to gather poems selected for their appropriateness for public worship, without regard to their intrinsic merit. In this manner the songs of Moses, and of Deborah, and even David's beautiful Song of the Bow, were omitted by the compiler, who inserts but two of the songs of Solomon, though he composed no less than a thousand and five.³ A recent writer has lamented the loss to the world's imagination from the fact that David's secular poems have perished. He misses the “Idyls of shepherd life,”⁴ some of which, preserved in his psalms, are painted “with more

¹ I. Chronicles xvi.

² Psalms xv, xvi, cvi-cviii, cxxxvi.

³ I. Kings iv, 32, 33.

⁴ Murray, “Psalms,” p. 173.



ANCIENT
JERUSALEM



MODERN
JERUSALEM

- DISTINCTION OF EDIFICES.
- Mosques and other Turkish builds
 - Churches and Cloisters
 - Christian Churches
 - Synagogues

of the Judges, and comprehended all able-bodied men, from twenty years old and upward. Any extensive reorganization of this ancient body would naturally provoke resentment; and yet, as it existed, its strongest sympathies lay in the allegiance of each man for his native tribe. With singular astuteness the king leaves this organization intact, providing for the national tie through the appointment of general officers taken from his faithful 600, whose services he retains as the nucleus of a standing army. And still further to instill the principles of national loyalty, he cuts the great host into twelve divisions, each of which is to serve in turn for thirty days under the king's order, near his person, or at any duty he may direct. In this manner every man in the kingdom, able to bear arms, came into touch with the influences circling about the throne and the Sacred Tabernacle. With equal sagacity the new ruler left the administration of justice for the most part with the local authorities, though the king's authority was felt in all parts of his realm.¹

Gradually the court assumes more and more the atmosphere of royal state. David has his bodyguard of Cherithites and Pelethites, hired from Philistia, and reminding us of the Pope's Swiss guard. His table is on a princely scale, providing not only for his extensive household, but also for the pensioners on the royal bounty, among whom we find Mephibosheth, the crippled son of Jonathan, whom David maintains for his father's sake. In all the kingdom David's word made the law, for none could turn to the right or left from all that he had spoken.²

All who came before him to plead their causes, as well as his special counselor, Nathan, prostrated themselves with their faces to the ground. In the war with Ammon, when the capital city, Rabbah, was nearly reduced, Joab does not proceed to the final assault till David appears on the ground and in person orders the storming of the town. The king's eye is upon every industry, and his great officials make their collecting tours in the olive-yards, and the vineyards, and the cattle ranges, and in every department of production and increase.

It is only at two points that we observe the will of the monarch to be restricted. The first is in the matter of the general census of the population; an enterprise which commends itself to our first thought as right and laudable, but which finally David confesses to have been a sinful project.³ The explanation is furnished by Öhler,⁴ who points out that such a consummation was "probably designed to lead to a complete military organization of the nation," thus tending toward a military despotism. As penalty for his offense he is given choice of three calamities: a seven-years' famine to befall the people, a three-months' defeat by his enemies, or for a pestilence to run its course for three days in the land. Unwilling to decide in so momentous an affair, the king chose to "fall into the hand of the Lord,"⁵ and to suffer what the Almighty might lay upon him. In consequence a plague was sent upon the nation, but on the third day of its ravage, in answer to David's prayer, the death angel stayed his power at the threshing floor of Araunah, the Jebusite. But he was also baffled in his intense desire to build a house unto the Lord—a permanent and fitting home for the Sacred Ark, to replace the frail structure of the Tabernacle. It grieved his heart that he should dwell in a house of cedar, while the Ark of God was still under curtains. But for the reason that he had so constantly been a man of war, he was debarred from this noble and glorious undertaking, which was consigned to his more peaceful son. In this striking manner, even under the old dispensation, God testifies that his religion is one of peace and good will to man. But, though restricted from the actual work of construction of the holy house, the king's last years were occupied in gathering material, and in laying up treasure, to be employed by his successor.

Yet in the main, David's enterprises were successful. Gradually the royal power became more firmly established, until under his hand Israel has a name in the earth, and ranks beside the great empires of Persia and Egypt. When the tread of the alien marauder ceased to be

¹ II. Samuel viii, 15.² II. Samuel xiv, 19.³ II. Samuel xxiv, 10.⁴ "Theology of the Old Testament," p. 371.⁵ II. Samuel ii, 14.

heard in the land, the people could employ themselves in their various vocations unhindered, and as a consequence the country rapidly increased in prosperity and riches. And the great king ruled over all with a firm yet benignant scepter, confirming justice, advancing the national welfare, and teaching the people the profit of righteousness and the joy of waiting on the Lord.

But before all this came to pass, and the kingdom had settled down into a state of profound restfulness and peace, the king was forced to carry on several important campaigns, in the course of which the realm was greatly extended, and respect for its authority widely disseminated. The prostration of the country after the overthrow of Saul, and during the period of the civil war, had given a coveted opportunity to the neighboring tribes on every side to make serious encroachments on Israelitish territory, of which they were not slow to avail themselves. It was in resistance to armed invasion of his kingdom that David took up the sword, for in all his numerous wars we do not once find him provoking a conflict. Only when previously assaulted does he assemble the host, and return blow for blow. The repulse of the double attack of the Philistines has already been described. Other spasmodic risings were attempted on the part of the Cities of the Plain, but were promptly crushed and resulted in David's reducing them to the former condition of Israel; for he removed their arms and munitions of war, and despoiled their towns of their principal possessions.

One of the first of David's foreign wars was with Moab, a pastoral country to the east of the Dead Sea. The occasion of the campaign does not appear, but it must have been of the most exasperating nature from the severity of the punishment which the king inflicted. There is a tradition to the effect that the king of Moab had put to death David's father and mother, whom he had consigned to the care of the Moabite in the period of his difficulties with Saul. But it is far more probable that Moab had made an attack on some of David's outlying districts, and had perpetrated acts of malignant atrocity. Mesha, who ruled in Moab some fifty years after this, tells in his inscription on the Moabite Stone how he had slain every inhabitant in the towns he had captured, sacrificing them to his god, Chemosh. Whatever the provocation, David moves promptly, and, having overwhelmed his assailant, makes reprisal for his cruelty by putting to death two-thirds of the Moabitish army. While we wonder at the severity of this chastisement, we must take into consideration the fact that the king had no fortresses on his border, and that the only way he had of guarding against the aggressions of his neighbors was by reducing those who were troublesome to a condition of dependence.

The war with Moab brought on a conflict with Ammon, which presently involved the entire border to the east and northeast; the Ammonites calling to their help the kings of the various principalities, which had grown powerful during the period of Israel's weakness. The immediate occasion of conflict was the gross insult to the ambassadors whom David had sent to express condolence to the king of Ammon on the death of his father. Manifestly Hanun was anxious to precipitate hostilities, for, in place of receiving the envoys kindly, he subjected them to the grossest humiliation on the pretense that they had come to spy out the land. If within our own remembrance all Paris was ablaze at the unfounded rumor that William of Germany had insulted the French ambassador, it may be imagined what a flame of passion would burst forth in Israel when David's men sent word, for their sense of indignity would not permit them to face the court, that Hanun had shaved off half their beards and cut off their robes at the girdle.

Joab was at once ordered into the field, and a great engagement followed not far from Medeba, a town of Reuben, which had been threatened by the enemy. The king of Ammon had subsidized the Syrian kings of Zobah, Maacah, and Tob, who, for the hire of a thousand silver talents, sent a force of 33,000 mercenaries to coöperate with him. Marching swiftly over Jordan, before the Syrians could effect a junction with Ammon, Joab places himself between the divided forces of his adversary. He arranges part of his army to face the Syrians to the

northward, under command of his brother Abishai, while he leads the main division in person against Ammon, in an attack so fierce that the day is quickly won. The main army of the Ammonites having been routed, the Syrian allies are panic stricken, and, giving way before Abishai, hasten to find refuge within the walls of Rabbah, the Ammonitish capital.

The victory was great, but by no means decisive. Ammon rallies its resources, and the Syrian kings, perceiving that they will be held responsible for their participation in the former campaign, assemble their best troops for a struggle of life or death. David himself, calling out all the host, marches into the territory of Zobah, and at Helam, a town whose site is unknown, ends the war with a single decisive blow. The fruits of the battle—40,000 footmen and the men of 7,000 chariots slain, a thousand war chariots captured, the most of which are destroyed, a great store of arms, a thousand shields overlaid with gold, the supply of copper which was afterward used for the brazen laver and the pillars and the furnishings of the Temple—attest the magnitude of the triumph.

The several Aramean principalities hasten to confess allegiance to so mighty a conqueror, and Israel at once comes into possession of the ancient city of Damascus, and of the whole region to the eastward, stretching as far as the bank of the Euphrates. If we refer the composition of the Twentieth Psalm to this time, we must admire the modesty of a great warrior, who can return to his capital city with his hundred war chariots of Zobah, and the immense spoil wrested from the enemy, to bid his singers chant his remembrance of the Lord,

“Some trust in chariots, and some in horses :

But we will make mention of the name of Jehovah our God.”¹

The glory of the Syrian conquest was enhanced by the results of the campaign against Edom, whose wild tribes had joined with Ammon against David. To bring them into subjection Abishai is sent into the South, where he wins a crushing battle with the Edomites in the Valley of Salt, at the lower end of the Dead Sea, following this by the capture of Petra, the Rock City of the Sons of Esau. At this stage Joab is ordered to the chief command, and carries on the war with relentless severity for six months, until all who resist him perish. One prince of Edom, still a child, is carried by his attendants to Egypt, and is protected by the Pharaoh. But so terrible was the name of Joab in the annals of his race, that it was not till he had heard of the death of the great captain that he ventured to return to his native land.² The whole region was made tributary to Israel, and the country was garrisoned by Hebrew outposts, as formerly Philistia had garrisoned Ephraim and Benjamin. To celebrate this conquest David erected a pillar, or some form of monument, which may have been an inscription, as Geikie suggests, “carved on the rocks of Edom, after the manner of Eastern kings.”³

¹ Psalm xx, 7.

² 1. Kings xi, 21.

³ “Hours with the Bible,” III, p. 249.

CHAPTER VII.

DAVID'S SIN, HIS REBELLIOUS SONS, AND HIS PLACE IN HISTORY.

MEANWHILE the war of the Ammonites was not yet finished. When, one by one, their allies had been cut off, they were gradually forced by the Hebrews into their walled city, Rabbah-Ammon, which lay some thirty miles to the northeast of Jerusalem. This was a town of great strength, having an upper citadel and a lower settlement, the latter containing the royal residence. The town was famous as the source of a perennial spring, from which it was known as the "City of Waters."¹

Owing to the abundance of the water supply, and the vigorous preparations of the Ammonites to resist a siege, as well as, no doubt, to the inexperience of the Hebrews in conducting an assault on a well fortified town, the reduction of the place lingered from month to month.

It was during this protracted siege of Rabbah that the event befell which ever after cast its somber shadow over the king's life, and which, though he repented of it and was forgiven of God, remains as the one dark spot on an otherwise charming and admirable character. While his officers were prosecuting the foreign war, David remained at home engaged in the affairs of his kingdom. Walking one evening on his palace roof, which overlooked a portion of the city, he observed a woman, Bathsheba by name, bathing in a tank constructed for the purpose on the roof of her home. She was of surpassing beauty, and the king, in place of resisting his desires, gave way to a violent infatuation, which broke over every restraint. Though she was the wife of Uriah, the Hittite, one of the foremost of his mighty men, who was fighting for the king before the walls of Rabbah, he suffered no honorable scruple to balk his pleasure, and sent his messengers to summon the woman to his harem. As the record goes, nothing indicates any reluctance on her part to accept the guilty honor, though from what follows it would seem that David trusted that the relation might be concealed. When, however, it appears that exposure is likely to occur, the king, with hope to screen his wickedness and the woman's shame, sends for Uriah from the front, as if to obtain news of the war. Uriah comes, but after he has delivered his tidings, the soldier's stern sense of duty kept him at the king's gate, instead of permitting him to retire to his house. All this effort on the king's part to secure concealment of his guilty course is a striking commentary on his customary rectitude of life, and also on the purity of morals then prevailing in Jerusalem. For in the nations round about it was habitual for the sovereign to summon to his couch, as wife or concubine, whomsoever he pleased.² After repeated opportunities were offered the unconsciously injured husband to visit his home, none of which he accepted, the king, led on from one sin to another, sent him with a message to Joab to place him in the front of the battle, and to retire from him that he might die. The fidelity of Joab to his king was unswerving, and he obeyed the mandate to the letter. Uriah was put in an exposed position and fell, murdered by David as much as if the king had stabbed him with his own hand. No sooner was the woman's customary period of mourning past, than David sent for her openly and added her to the number of his acknowledged wives. So far all had passed after the manner of any unscrupulous oriental court; but now a scene follows which has no parallel in the annals of Bagdad or Constantinople, and which stands out as a lasting memorial of the influence of righteousness on the kingdom, and of the better nature of David himself. For when Nathan the prophet comes with his allegory of the poor man and his one

¹ Stanley, "Jewish Church," II, p. 113.

² Geikie, "Hours with the Bible," p. 271.

ewe lamb, of which his richer neighbor had despoiled him, and makes his sharp application, "Thou art the man," the king confesses his guilt, and falls prostrate before God in penitential supplication for pardon.

Two psalms are the product of this experience. In the fifty-first one hears the bitterness of remorse, when the king lifts up his voice to God,

"Against thee, thee only have I sinned,
And done that which is evil in thy sight."

How earnestly does he plead for forgiveness, and for return of the divine favor,

"Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God,
Thou God of my salvation;
And my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness."

In the Thirty-second Psalm we have intimation of the duration of David's penitential distress,

"Day and night thy hand was heavy upon me:
My moisture was changed as with the drouth of summer."

But at length, having given himself to God in fresh consecration, he feels the assurance of reconciliation. The accents of a real repentance are in this exclamation,

"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid.
I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord;
And thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

But though God may pardon, there are evil consequences to follow. Whoever lifts the tide-gates of sin opens the way for floods of sorrow and suffering. David has given occasion for the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, so Nathan declared; and the echoes of their evil speaking are still in our ears. As partial expiation, Bathsheba's child must die. During its lingering illness David is inconsolable; not so much, it may be believed, from affection, as from the consciousness that its life is forfeited for his misdoing. And even after its decease his heart is heavy.

The siege of Rabbah progresses, but the king lingers in Jerusalem. Realizing as no other can the occasion of David's indifference to the issues of the campaign, Joab sends the sharp message that he has taken the City of Waters (so the lower town was named) and that the king must come to order the assault on the citadel, lest the honor of its capture go to the captain rather than to the sovereign. Under this pressure David goes to the town, whither he had sent Uriah to die, the sight of its battlements driving the arrow of remorse into his heart. The city falls under the fierce rush of the Hebrews, and the Ammonitish nation is put to hard labor in the timber yards, and the grain fields, and the brick yards.¹ With the subjection of the Ammonites, David's foreign wars, all of which were successful, were ended, and the kingdom was established on a sure foundation.

But while the latter half of David's reign was one of continued splendor, and while the nations about him were glad to count as their friend and ally so redoubtable a conqueror, his court was the storm center of intrigue and commotion, threatening the safety of the throne, and in one instance bursting into open insurrection, in which the king was compelled to flee to the wilderness to save his life.

The source of all these troubles, when traced to their beginnings, is found in the complications of the king's household, and in the natural results of the polygamous relation. Maurice has well remarked how David's history supplies "exemplifications of all the miseries

¹ II. Samuel xii, 31. So this difficult passage is best interpreted.

and curses which spring from the mixture of families and the degradation of women in a court and country where polygamy exists.”¹ The king had brought to Jerusalem an extensive harem, comprising six wives, besides several concubines. Ten of the latter are mentioned,² but they are evidently only part of the number, and to these Bathsheba is added as a lawful wife, and the favorite of all. Most probably the concubines were housed together, as in the harem of the sultan to this day; but apparently the wives held separate apartments of their own, connected with the palace, where they dwelt with their children. Each of these establishments, of necessity, was a nest of conspiracy and intrigue.

It was amid this maze of plotting and counterplotting for the king's favor, and all the possible advantages arising therefrom, that Amnon, the prince royal, the son of Ahinoam of Jezreel, grows to manhood. He is weak and unprincipled, and so little master of himself that he grows thin and pale through constantly meditating the blackest of crimes.

Absalom and Tamar, son and daughter of Maacah, the princess of Geshur, form another group in the royal circle. Brother and sister are famed for their extraordinary beauty, excelling in this regard all the other children of David, all of whom inherit the personal graces of their father. Absalom is proud, and yet able to bend to the rabble to gain popular favor, and is gifted like Alcibiades with the ready speech which attracts the multitude.

Adonijah, the son of Haggith, the dancer, is bold and self-possessed, and nourishes plans with his secret counselors, who are ready to further his fortunes and their own, if not by fair means, then by foul.

Still another clique in the palace clusters about the graceful Bathsheba, who is David's most intimate confidante, and who now has another son, whom the king, to signalize his trust in God's pardon, has named Solomon the Peaceful. In the accidents of human life it is no impossible thing, particularly in a court where the succession is determined not by primogeniture, but by the will of the king, that this child may come to the throne; and Bathsheba is quick to meet any scheme to her son's disadvantage with another to neutralize its effect.

But even more noticeable, from its influence on events presently to transpire, is the company that stands about the person of Ahithophel, one of David's counselors, and the man who was regarded as the shrewdest and most far-sighted in Israel. He was grandfather to Bathsheba, and had never forgiven her or the king for their offense against his honor; though for the time he dissembled his hatred, and was daily in the king's presence as one of his most trusted friends. But like Judas, of whom our Lord makes him a type,³ he was covering malevolence in order to have it gather strength for the fiercer flame. The whispers of this astute man were guarded, but each was a barbed arrow, poisoned with the venomous spirit which knows not how to forgive, or, not forgiving, to forget.

In such a labyrinth of conflicting purposes we may not look for peace or innocence. If the king worships God, the most of the princes bend their souls to passion or to ambition. It is no wonder then that Amnon startles the court by the outrage of his half-sister, Tamar, whom the wily Jonadab has beguiled to his apartments under pretense of ministering to her brother in his sickness. The shrieks of the dishonored girl, as she makes her way to the apartments of Absalom, tearing her gaily colored robe,⁴ must have struck dismay to the heart of the over-indulgent king; who, though wroth with Amnon, does not punish the heir to his throne. Two long years of bitter thoughts rankling in the bosom of Absalom follow—of thoughts which sometimes break out into bitter words. All this time the dark scowl⁵ is never absent from the face of this prince, who is meditating vengeance. At last he strikes his blow, and the court is shocked again by the intelligence that Absalom has slain his elder brother at a sheep-shearing festival, to which he had invited the princes.

¹ Maurice, "Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament," p. 62.

² II. Samuel xv, 16.

³ John xiii, 18, in reference to Psalm lv, 12-14.

⁴ II. Samuel xiii, 19.

⁵ II. Samuel xiii, 32; Ewald.

For three years Absalom is kept in exile at the home of his mother's father, in Geshur, beyond the Jordan, but at last is permitted to return to Jerusalem, where, however, the king's resentment for the fratricide is so great that he does not see the face of his son. Finally, through the mediation of Joab, a reconciliation is effected, sincere on the father's part, but hollow enough with Absalom, who comes back to plot not only for the succession, but also to add to the murder of his brother the seizure of his father's scepter, though it may cost that father's life. With a perseverance and systematic method worthy of a better cause, he sets about winning the favor of the populace. He rides about the city in state greater than is affected by any of his brother princes. He mingles among the suitors at the seat of judgment in the king's gate, displaying particular deference toward any whom the course of justice has compelled to wait, or who have been disappointed at the decisions of David. By refusing the salutations of those who approached him, and greeting them with an effusive familiarity, he attached them to himself. Ahithophel, seeing in Absalom the rising star, joined himself to his party, and gave him shrewd counsel in the ways of detaching the popular heart from the king.

Nothing attempted by the infatuated prince shows more clearly the astute counsel of Ahithophel, than Absalom's encouragement of the jealousy of Judah against the rest of the kingdom. For Judah, when it furnished its king to rule over Israel, had expected to hold precedence over the rest of the tribes;¹ but David, in his policy of making Israel a nation rather than an agglomeration of separate provinces, had ignored the tacit claim. Playing upon this discontent of Judah, Absalom gathers adherents throughout the tribe, assisted the more by the fact that Ahithophel was of South Judea, and able to influence his friends in that region.

When at length his preparations are completed, under pretense of worshiping God at Hebron in fulfillment of a vow, an excuse which would best win David's consent, the prince hastens to his father's first capital. There, after binding his guests to his fortunes by the seal of a joint ceremony of sacrifice, he raises the standard of revolt, and sounds the trumpet summoning all Israel to acknowledge him king in place of his father.

Bad news travels swiftly, and the aged king is soon told, almost to the breaking of his heart, that his favorite son is a traitor, and that his own tribe of Judah has deserted him. Intelligence that Ahithophel, his trusted counselor, has cast in his lot with the rebellion, as it seems to augur the success of the enterprise, makes the disaster more complete.

At once David settles on his course of action. If all the nation is with Absalom, he must not tarry at Jerusalem, lest there be great shedding of blood; and so he concludes to take refuge beyond the Jordan, till the people have recovered from their brief madness. As he takes his way out of the city which he had created, the lamentations of the inhabitants are heard on every side.

Calamity reveals not only the hollowness of false friendships, but also the sincerity of honest faith. How beautiful at this time the devotion of Zadok and Abiathar, who follow him with the Ark of God; and the steadfast fidelity of Ittai of Gath, who declares that he will follow David for life or death; and the grief of Hushai, who comes in open sorrow, his priestly garment rent, and with dust sprinkled upon his head!

The loyalty of these friends restores a gleam of hope to David's heart. He accepts the service of Ittai, but bids Zadok and Abiathar return to Jerusalem, where their knowledge of current events may be made useful to him. Hushai he directs to attend at the court of Absalom, where he may match with his craft the treasonable counsels of Ahithophel. Then the sorrowful procession goes forward to be met by the gifts of Ziba, and the rage of Shimei, the latter a survivor of the house of Saul, who walks on the crest of the hill above them,

¹ II. Samuel xix, 43.



DAVID ROBERTS.

THE PILLAR OF ABSALOM.

hurling stones and shouting curses, thus venting the pent-up wrath of the old dynasty against its successor.

That evening they reach the Jordan, where they pause for refreshment, but are roused again by messengers from the high priests and bidden to put the Jordan between them and the pursuit of Absalom. Before the morning dawns they have crossed the river, and find refuge in Mahanaim, of Gilead, the former capital of Ishbosheth.

Meanwhile the wisdom of despatching Hushai to Absalom has been justified. Ahithophel, with a view to create a breach between Absalom and David too wide for any chance of reconciliation, had advised the rebellious prince to appropriate his father's concubines—an offense to oriental eyes the worst that could be conceived. To this he added the proposition of pursuing the fugitive with 12,000 men, overtaking him when footsore and weary, and slaying him outright, thus bringing the contest to a speedy termination. When this plan, so eminently sagacious for Absalom, was discussed in the council, Hushai, with the single object to gain time for David, and for the people to take a second sober thought, draws a picture of David's prowess, and the need of attacking him, if at all, with a great army. His words win the general approval. Ahithophel, knowing thoroughly the hollowness of the conspiracy, and that its only chance of success lies in a sudden and forceful blow, retires from the council in despair, and, hastening to his home among the southern hills, sets his house in order, and, like Judas, puts a cord to his neck and dies by his own hand.

From the moment that Ahithophel deserted him, Absalom's cause was lost. He led his men of Judea across the Jordan, and there in the "Wood of Ephraim" fought the battle, which, like that of the younger Cyrus, ended the revolt by the death of the prime mover. But while Cyrus fell bravely fighting in the midst of his soldiers, the rebellious prince perished miserably by a catastrophe so appropriate that the good of all ages have esteemed it the act of God.

The forces of David are divided into three bands under Joab, Abishai, and Ittai. They are familiar with the ins and outs of the forest, which is grown up with underbrush, forbidding any distant view. The men of Absalom are bewildered in the thickets, and flee before David's veteran soldiers. Absalom, escaping on his mule, meets a column of his father's troops, and setting off at full speed rides under the spreading branches of a great tree, where he is caught up by his long hair, and left suspended, while the mule goes on. And there Joab finds him, and thrusts him through with three staves, in direct disobedience to the king's order that he should not harm the young man, leaving ten of his men to complete the bloody work.

It seems to have been a kind of poetic justice which permitted the long hair, in which this debonair prince took such pride, and the royal mule which he had appropriated from his father, to contribute toward his unhappy end. And his burial was no more honorable than his death, for Joab had the body cast into a gully and covered by a pile of stones.

Once more we observe the gentleness of the aged king, for he harbors no resentment against the child who would have slain him like a dog. When he asks of the messenger his tidings, it is with the tender touch, "Is it well with the young man, Absalom?" as if to excuse the rebellion as the indiscretion of irresponsible youth-time. When he learns the sad truth, it is to go aside to the chamber over the gate, and cry aloud with that plaintive cry, whose echoes still move our hearts, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

One single shudder of the great rebellion followed. In the assembly convened at Gilgal to accomplish the restoration of David by a renewed popular election, there was a noble emulation of the people to renew their allegiance. But in the midst of the negotiations it was noticed that the tribe of Judah had escorted the king to the convocation. Suddenly the trumpet is blown, and the cry goes up, "To your tents, O Israel!" The jealousy of the northern tribes



GUSTAVE DORF.

DAVID MOURNING FOR ABSALOM.

against the South has burst into a sudden flame that scorches the tie of loyalty. The leader of the new insurrection was Sheba, a Benjamite, a rank partisan of Ephraim. For a few days the rising promised to be unmanageable; for the ten tribes drew away from the king to a man, leaving him to be escorted to Jerusalem by Judah alone, which from now on never fails in loyalty to the royal line. But the bubble bursts when Joab pursues Sheba to the little town of Beth-maachah, and the inhabitants, to escape the horrors of a siege, toss the insurgent's head over the wall. During the remainder of the king's reign, as well as that of his illustrious successor, there was no further attempt to cast off the authority of the crown. In the nearly ten years that follow, affairs were so peaceful as to leave scant material for history.

The numbering of the people, with a view to stricter military service, which has already been noticed as provoking the restlessness of the nation and incurring the rebuke of God, was undertaken at this time, and abandoned almost as soon as begun. Of principal interest as connected with this incident was the purchase from Araunah, the Jebusite, of his threshing floor as a place for sacrifice, for this spot on Mount Moriah, where the plague was stayed,¹ was ultimately chosen as the site for the Holy of Holies of the great Temple, which Solomon erected.

And it was during these quiet years, while the whole land prospered, that David was amassing material and vast treasure in gold and silver, and laying plans for that structure, which he might not erect in fact, but the joy of preparing for which was not denied him. But calmly as the sunset of his life might draw on, the approach of his three score years and ten finds him sinking under the burden of premature old age. The natural vigor of his originally firm constitution had been shaken by his early dangers and exposures; while the wranglings of the palace, and the blighted promise of so many of his children had worn upon his mind, and through the mind upon the body.

Overborne at length by infirmities, he takes to his bed and is less and less able to attend to the affairs of his kingdom. Adonijah, a second Absalom, takes advantage of the king's weakness to intrigue for the succession after the death of his father, which event cannot be far removed. He rides forth in state, after the fashion of his ill-starred brother, and seeks to win over the populace. He gains the favor of Joab, who has always been faithful to David, but is not well disposed toward Solomon, who is whispered to be David's choice as heir to the throne. Abiathar, also, the elder high priest, and many of the officers of the army, and the rest of the king's sons, favor the ambitious designs of Adonijah.

Following almost to the letter the plans of Absalom, though omitting to ask the king's consent, Adonijah invites his friends to a feast at a spring outside the walls, in the course of which it is his purpose to assume the sovereignty, claiming that his bedridden father is unable to perform the duties of king. But the bold scheme is balked by the loyalty of Nathan, who, in concert with Bathsheba, wins David's consent to have Solomon proclaimed king, with all show of civil and military authority.

Soon after this, as if his life's work were well done, David composes himself for death. Naturally his mind reverts to the experiences of the past, and to the hopes of the kingdom. Happily the last hymn of the old monarch, embodying these thoughts, has been preserved in the historical books, though not included in the Psalter. Despite the king's weakness, the same trust in God and the triumph of righteousness, which adorned his earlier verse, breathes out in these rugged lines. He recounts his lowly origin, and acknowledges that it was God who gave him the kingdom, and put the words of inspiration upon his lips,

"David, the son of Jesse, saith,
And the man who was raised on high saith,
The anointed of the God of Jacob,

¹ See *supra*, p. 32; also II. Samuel xxiv, 16.

And the sweet psalmist of Israel:
The spirit of the Lord spoke by me,
And his word was upon my tongue."

Contemplating the prospects awaiting his son, if he rule righteously, the aged singer continues:

"The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spake to me:
One that ruleth over men righteously,
That ruleth in the fear of God,
He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth,
A morning without clouds;
When the tender grass springeth out of the earth,
Through clear shining after rain."

Modestly he confesses that his own rule has sometimes been wanting, but still with joy rests on the sure covenant God has made with him, that his house shall grow and prosper, saying:

"Verily, my house is not so with God;
Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant,
Ordered in all things and sure:
For it is all my salvation, and all my desire,
Although he maketh it not to grow."

But there are ungodly men who regard not earthly rulers, nor even the King of Kings—men fierce and sanguinary. Of such, like the sons of Zeruiah, whose hands were too heavy for David, his son Solomon must beware. They must be tamed with the strong hand, and yet, despite all their power, they shall be brought to naught.

"But the ungodly shall be all of them as thorns to be thrust away,
For they cannot be taken with the hand:
But the man that toucheth them
Must be armed with iron and the staff of a spear;
And they shall be utterly burned with fire in their place."

If, along with the expressions of confidence in the hymn, there seems to be a minor strain of struggle and sorrow, it is no more than what might be expected from a heart that had known what life is, with its ofttimes baffled purposes, and its griefs impinging so closely on its joys. Dean Stanley recognizes it as a faithful representation of David's experiences, and pronounces it the "fitting memorial of the man who was at once the king and the prophet, the penitent and saint of the ancient church."¹

It was at the age of seventy, according to Josephus,² that David died, having reigned over Judea in Hebron seven and a half years, and over all Israel in Jerusalem for thirty-three. As with Samuel, such was the veneration for his memory that the rigidity of oriental custom respecting burials was relaxed, and his body was deposited in a rock-hewn sepulcher within the city walls. The site of this tomb was still pointed out in the days of Jesus, but has since been lost. But, though remembrance of his burial place is forgotten, the magnanimity of the man, his gentle kindness, his wise rule as king, and his whole-hearted devotion to God, will ever endure. He never usurped the liberties of his people. He did not employ his great powers as king for his private advantage. He did not make his judicial administration the engine of oppression. He harbored no petty revenges. His fealty to the house of Saul, under circumstances that might have warranted the severest reprisals, was unswerving. From first to last he was in sympathy with both priests and prophets, thus showing that he was fulfilling the higher

¹ Stanley, "Jewish Church," II, p. 155.

² Josephus, "Antiquities," VII, xv, 2.

aims of the theocratic kingdom. He found the land distracted and trodden under the heel of a foreign foe, and lifted it to the rank of the ancient empires of Phœnicia or Egypt. The national worship was crude, but he gave it purity and dignity, and a supremacy over the affections of Israel which it never lost. No man ever felt more deeply the superintending providence of God. Maurice explains this by "the continuity, the successiveness, of the steps in his history, which assured him that God's hand had been directing the whole of it."¹ Having this conviction, he has sung this consciousness of the divine leading by harp and psalm into the souls, not only of his own race, but also of all, whether Jews or Christians, who are believers in the God of the Bible.

If we touch on his one point of weakness, it is well to remember that he was a man like others, and that he ruled in a barbarous time. Wellhausen remarks of this, "Even his conduct in the affair of Uriah is not by any means wholly to his discredit; not many kings can be mentioned who would have shown repentance, public and deep, such as he manifested at Nathan's rebuke."²

Barring this one fault, his career is almost ideal. Because of his abiding faithfulness the Scripture speaks of him as a man after God's own heart. No higher encomium is pronounced on the later conduct of the people than that they walked in the ways of David and Solomon. The Sage of Chelsea, no mean critic of men, is willing to sit at David's feet and listen to his life and history as they stream out through the psalms, "the truest emblem ever given us of a man's moral progress and warfare here below." Carlyle sees here, not moral delinquency, but the "faithful struggle of an earnest soul toward what is good and best; struggle often baffled—sore baffled—driven as into entire wreck; yet a struggle never ended, ever with tears, repentance, true unconquerable purpose begun anew."³

¹ Maurice, "Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament," p. 57.

² "History of Israel," p. 455.

³ Carlyle, "Heroes and Hero Worship," p. 72.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE YOUNG PRINCE SOLOMON.

THE young prince Solomon, to whom the sovereignty had been transferred before the death of his father, entered upon a reign, which, however souber its close, as a whole is justly regarded as one of the most magnificent in the annals of kings. At the time of his accession he must have been about twenty years of age, reminding us in the responsible duties pressing upon his youth of that remarkable circle of sovereigns, who in the sixteenth century were so early burdened with the affairs of nations.¹

The child of parents both of whom were renowned for their personal beauty, we are not surprised that the chance allusions of Scripture writers, as well as the traditions of his people, uniformly represent him as the possessor of rare personal attractions. As to his preparation for his great future, we are to regard him as more fortunate in his ancestry than in his training. In that polygamous household of David the young prince could have had but scant acquaintance with his father; while the character of his mother, Bathsheba, the too-willing paramour of the king, and the ambitious *intrigante* of the palace, forbids the supposition that he could have gained much profitable instruction from this source. From Nathan's interest in securing the succession in his favor it is imagined that the lad may have had this "faithful prophet as tutor; and we may well believe from David's delight in music and song that his favorite child was well taught in these accomplishments, as well as in the more active exercises of arms. And yet, as the youngest of David's sons,² his early years must have been passed in comparative retirement.

He is brought in a single day from the shadow of obscurity by the rash act of the scheming Adonijah, who, trusting in the coöperation of Joab the captain of the host, and of Abiathar the high priest, and even more in the age and infirmities of the bedridden king, appoints a feast at the stone Zoheleth, not far from the spring Rogel, in the course of which he intends to announce himself king in place of David. But the precipitancy of the act, in not first securing the king's concurrence, defeats the enterprise. For, while his friends are eating of his feast, and are raising the cry, "God save King Adonijah!" Bathsheba and Nathan are carrying the tidings of the incipient revolt to the decrepit monarch.

Justly incensed at the slight against his authority, David swears an oath to Bathsheba that Solomon shall be king after him, and bids Nathan that self-same day seat Solomon upon his own mule, and, taking the royal guard, proceed to Gihon and anoint him there king over Israel. Not a moment is lost in obedience to this eminently prudent instruction. The guard is summoned and the line formed. The young prince is seated in royal state upon the mule that is kept sacredly for the monarch's use, and the triumphal march to Gihon is commenced.

As the line advances and the significance of the pageant is understood, the people follow with every demonstration of joy. At Gihon the ceremony of anointing was performed, Zadok the priest officiating, and using a horn of consecrated oil which he had brought from the tabernacle. At this official act, which confirmed the new king in possession of the scepter, the people piped with pipes, and greeted their new ruler with such enthusiastic exclamation, as the sacred historian declares with oriental hyperbole, "that the earth was rent with the sound of them."

The respective situations of Gihon and Zoheleth emphasize the dramatic situation. If Gihon, as Major Conder insists,³ be the springhead of En-Rogel, it was between Adonijah's

¹ Henry VIII., crowned at 18; Francis I., at 20; and Charles V., as Emperor of Germany, at 19.

² I. Chronicles iii, 5.

³ "Handbook," p. 335.

company and the city, and when Solomon was crowned he must have been in full view of the presumptuous elder brother and his supporters. In such a case it would hardly seem to have required the friendly offices of Jonathan, the son of Abiathar, to announce to the conspirators that their cause was lost. The city was in possession of Solomon, and Benaiah the captain of the guard, and all his men were committed to the new allegiance.

At once the terrified guests separate, each going his own way. Adonijah seeks refuge in the Sanctuary, where he catches hold of the horns of the altar in his abject terror. We are happy to recognize in Solomon's first executive act an unexpected magnanimity of spirit. He well understood that if Adonijah had succeeded in his enterprise he would have been put to death, in accordance with settled oriental usage, which still held in Turkey into the nineteenth century. But in his benignant confidence in the impregnable strength of his own position, he pardons his brother, on condition that he plots no further mischief, and generously bids him go to his own house.

Still, to further establish the new administration while David is yet living, a great convocation of the chieftains of the tribes and the principal officers of the kingdom is summoned at the capital, and the old monarch, weak and trembling, presents his son to the representatives of the nation. He commits both prince and subjects to faithful service for God in a speech full of tender pathos, and transfers into Solomon's hands the plans and the treasure laid up for the building of the Temple. The historian records among the notable incidents of the day that the king, in blessing the assembly and the young ruler, stands upon his feet, supported doubtless by his attendants. So, long after, the beloved John, when he could not stand alone, was helped to rise while he breathed forth his beautiful admonition, "Little children, love one another." Apparently this was David's last public appearance before his decease, which followed soon after.

Hardly were the obsequies of the late king over, when a solemn festival of accession was held at Gibeon, the site of the old Sanctuary, where Zadok was ministering at the altar. It was a ceremony long to be remembered, for it was conducted on a scale of profuse magnificence, in a measure prophetic of the splendor of the reign about to be inaugurated. Accompanied by all the dignitaries of the civil and military list, and all the princes and heads of houses, Solomon went in state to the "High Place," which overlooked all the portion that had been assigned to the tribe of Judah. On arrival, through the generosity of the king, a thousand sacrifices were offered, and solemn services of worship held, which must have continued for days.

During this festival occurred the night vision, in the course of which the young ruler made the decision of his life. "Ask what I shall give thee," was the voice of the Lord; and the response of his heart was not for a wider kingdom, not for the heaping up of riches, not for the crushing of his enemies, not for length of days, but rather for what Dean Stanley calls "the ideal answer for such a prince"¹—an understanding heart to judge his people, so that he might discern good from bad. It was a better choice than the many make, though not by any means the best. David, in his whole-souled dependence on God, would have sought deeper consecration of spirit. Taught by what we observe afterward, we catch the hollow ring of this word "wisdom." Had it included the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, the chronicler would have been enabled to dwell with more edification on the later events of a life which opened so auspiciously.

But unfortunately this prince had been trained more in the form than in the fact of religion, and to regard the magnificent surroundings of an ornate public worship as of greater value than the intimate communion of the soul with God. And yet, because in the main the request was good, and also because, whether asked in vision or sought in the voluntary consecration of faculties on some single purpose, each man is given some supreme desire, whether it

¹ Stanley, "Jewish Church," II, p. 195.

be the learning of an Erasmus, the riches of a Cræsus, the conquests of an Alexander, or the souls of men for a Paul, the Lord blessed Solomon with insight and wisdom and such keen penetration of human motives that the memory of it lingers still in our common speech, and in all the traditions of the East.

That the young king was not a mere weakling of the court, but rather a man of singularly ripe discernment, and well qualified to give sound judgment, was soon demonstrated in a way that impressed itself on the oriental imagination. As he sits in his palace gate to decide the causes of the people, two women approach, each claiming the one child as her own. To settle this obscure question of motherhood Solomon calls for a sword and bids his officer divide the child and give a half to each. The one was content with this, but the other cried out to spare the child and give it alive to her rival. At this the king gave the babe to the woman whose heart yearned for the saving it, declaring that she was the true mother. In thus promptly eliciting testimony from the pleadings of maternal affection, the king had judged the case, and honored himself; for the nation heard and respected the ruler's wisdom, rejoicing that God was with him. But that the young king had learned the difficult art of governing, is even more apparent to the western mind from his decision in dealing with Adonijah and the other conspirators, after they had made a second attempt against him. For the elder brother, in place of feeling grateful for the king's indulgence in overlooking his former attempt to seize the throne, seems to have taken this leniency as a token of weakness. He consults with Joab and Abiathar, and such others as he could reach, and at length wins over Bathsheba, the queen-mother, whose influence in a polygamous court is always commanding, to prefer his request for Abishag, the beautiful Shunamite, for his wife. How he could have imagined that Solomon would be blind to the purport of this petition is not clear. To possess oneself of the late king's concubine leaves but one step to the throne. It has been suggested that, as Abishag was more a nurse to David than a bride, Adonijah may have supposed that his ultimate purpose might be overlooked.

If so, he reckoned without his host. For no sooner does Bathsheba prefer the request than Solomon, in an outburst of justifiable wrath, declares that his brother might as well have asked for the kingdom. It is now no puppet king who holds the throne. Conspiraey may not sharpen its fangs under the shadow of his scepter. Adonijah has abused his pardon, and so Benaiah, the captain of the guard, is bidden to do his office as against a public foe. The abettors of treason are also dealt with as becomes a king. Because of his faithful services to David, Abiathar, the high priest, is spared, but exiled to his patrimonial estate, and Zadok, who had been his coadjutor in the priestly office, is installed as the high priest of the kingdom. Joab's punishment was more summary. At tidings of Adonijah's death, the captain of the host, now a gray-haired old man, fled to Gibeon, and there took refuge at the horns of the altar in the Sanctuary. His life had been filled with violence. He had been faithful to David, but through his knowledge of the king's guilty secret had held a rod of terror over the throne. He had murdered Abner and Amasa, and had slain Absalom in violation of the king's express command. Now, at last, vengeance tracks his footsteps. Valiant in battle, he now cowers in fear for his life, reminding us of that Jeffreys, who begged the guard not to let the mob kill him, and of the Robespierre, who, after sending so many to the guillotine, is condemned by the Mountain to the tumbril and the knife. As he had slain both Abner and Amasa to maintain his post as commander-in-chief of the national militia, there seems a just Nemesis in his falling into the hands of Benaiah, his most prominent competitor for the honors and emoluments of his high office. The Sanctuary was never intended to protect an outlaw, and so by order from the throne the cringing Joab is torn from the altar, to be cut down by the captain of the guard. It is a lamentable end, but it justifies the testimony of Scripture respecting the violent man, that his mischief shall return upon his own head.

CHAPTER IX.

SOLOMON IN HIS GLORY.

THE vigor of administration displayed in smothering the beginnings of conspiracy was soon visible in every department of Solomon's extensive realm.

Edom and Syria took advantage of the confusion arising from a change of ruler to raise the standard of revolt; and some of the subject Canaanites, who were restless under the servitude imposed by David, attempted to regain their freedom, and made the little principality of Geshur a rallying place of insurrection. But so weak were their efforts that Benaiah was able to suppress them with his regular force, without necessity of calling out the national reserves. Wellhausen, it is true, complains of Solomon for not having crushed Rezon, after the battle of Hamath, and so prevented his building up a new Syrian power at Damascus.¹ But this judgment is based upon the whole issue of Solomon's reign, with all its later corrupting influences, and loses sight of the policy which the king followed so successfully in his earlier years, of winning alliances by friendship. Had the glory of the kingdom continued, and the attachment of the people not been undermined by the exactions of the tax-gatherer and the introduction of foreign vices, Jerusalem would have had a tributary in Damascus, rather than an active rival.

While engaged in repressing these disorders, the king extends his foreign relations, and makes an advantageous alliance with Egypt, the daughter of whose Pharaoh he espouses, bringing her to Jerusalem with great pomp and festivity. He cements, however, a still more important alliance with the Phœnician realm of Tyre, whose king, Hiram, had sent an embassy to congratulate him on his accession to sovereignty. As the Phœnicians were a commercial and maritime people, occupying a narrow strip on the Mediterranean shore, and skilled in arts and manufactures, but dependent as regards a food supply, the relation between Tyre and Jerusalem became mutually advantageous. A brisk trade sprang up between the two nations, Phœnicia furnishing the precious metals, and cloths of the richest dyes, and timber from her famous cedar forests in the Lebanon ranges, in exchange for the corn, and wine, and olive oil from the upland plains of Israel.

At this time Israel was in its glory. Its territory included all that Solomon had received from his father, extending from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, and from Hamath on the north to and including Gaza on the south. The population of Jewish origin, not counting the subject Canaanites, who had been reduced to a condition of helotry, numbered some five million souls, or about five hundred to the square mile.² As the land was in a state of profound peace, the people had nothing to divert them from the pursuits of industry, and there followed, consequently, a term of marvelous prosperity. The young king reorganized his household and his civil list, and with keen appreciation of character appointed the most capable officials and administrators. He set Benaiah, who had distinguished himself in the wars of David, as commander-in-chief of the army of the kingdom, and Zadok as high priest. He created two scribes to draw up the royal edicts, and record the annals of his reign. The extension of the court also compelled the appointment of a new official, the chamberlain, who was to be superintendent of the household, purveyor of supplies and comptroller of expenditures.

The breadth of this official's responsibility may be imagined when it is noticed that he was supplied with twelve under-officers, one for each month in the year, who were to meet his requisitions by drafts upon the people. The amount of provisions for a single day—some eighteen

¹ "So far was he from showing military capacity, that he allowed a new Syrian kingdom to arise at Damascus, a far more dangerous thing for Israel than that at Zobah, which had been destroyed, and which it succeeded."—Wellhausen, "History of Israel," p. 456. ² Conder, "Handbook," p. 281.

thousand pounds of bread, thirty oxen, a hundred sheep, besides fowl and game — indicates that the great king was feeding daily at his table from 10,000 to 12,000 persons; this number including the inmates of the palace, the officials of the court, the royal guardsmen, and the servants of the household. Another official of more ominous character is appointed to have charge of the forced labor, which the king required in his various enterprises. The man chosen for this post was Adoniram, a name which, after his long service, extending into the reign of Rehoboam, came to be regarded with detestation and horror.

As the pomp and circumstance of the throne increases, Solomon raises a force of 12,000 horsemen, and rides in his journeys about the city like the kings of Egypt in his own richly carved chariot, attended by a mounted guard. New as was this consequence of royalty to Jerusalem, it was no less welcome. The fame of the gifted ruler goes far and wide. He governs magnificently but justly. He throttles all misrule and oppression with a firm hand, so that every man dwelt safely under his own vine and fig tree from Dan to Beersheba. He cultivates to some extent the arts of music and literature. Tradition, which busies itself with his "wisdom," credits him with composing 3,000 proverbs, 1,005 songs, and a disquisition on animals, birds, and plants, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall. Of these writings there remain four psalms,¹ whose subjects connect themselves with the king; a portion of the Proverbs, which was compiled with others by King Hezekiah, and the Book of Ecclesiastes, which, with its speech of the vanity of earthly possessions in comparison with trust in God, appears as the fitting expression of the king's old age. If, for various reasons, we may doubt whether Solomon was the author of the Song of Songs, we may still trace its origin to his time and influence. The sententious wisdom of the Proverbs, "gifts to the people, not the produce of the people,"² is precisely what should be expected from the practical mind of a king who comprehended the value of prudence, intelligence, and a fit preparation for life. If, on the one hand, we may agree with Mr. Whitelaw Reid that the best treatise on business for a young man just starting in the world is the Book of Proverbs, we may also thank its author for establishing so clearly that there is no wisdom without goodness and virtue, and that all vicious courses are the synonym of contemptible folly.

But more than in the making of books, the king displays the acuteness of his mind in his measures for extending the commerce of his country. A nation is prosperous when it is most happily and heartily employed. Reference has been already made to the reciprocal trade of Israel and Tyre. This was, however, but the beginning of a more extensive traffic, which reached out for the commerce of the East, controlling the trade between Egypt and Damascus, and sending its ships far over the sea. For once a great king turned merchant, and made commerce a government monopoly. To facilitate trade with Babylon he is said to have founded Tadmor in the desert, the town which became the seat of Zenobia, and the prey of the ambition of Aurelian. From Egypt he brought fine linens, and horses, and chariots, trading them off for gold and silver to the Syrian and Hittite kings, and sending back to the Nile country the rich wines for which Israel was famous.

But Solomon's most audacious foreign enterprise was his sending out shipping from the Red Sea. With the assistance of his royal friend of Tyre, he builds a fleet at Ezion-Geber, which presently becomes a busy port, and the home of many Hebrews.³ Lading with the products of Babylon and Tyre, the ships sailed away to the East, to return after a three years' voyage, bringing commodities the nature of which shows that their destination must have been the mouth of the Indus, in Asia. The gold of Ophir,⁴ the white tusks of the elephant, the ebony and sandal wood, the hideous ape and the gorgeous peacock, filled with amazement the

¹ The Second, the Forty-fifth, the Seventy-second, and the One Hundred and Twenty-seventh.

² Stanley, "Jewish Church," II, p. 287.

³ I. Kings ix, 26.

⁴ Lenormant & Chevalier, "Ophir, the country of Abhira, near the present province of Guzerat."—"Ancient History of the East," I, p. 145.

eyes of the gazers at the returning caravans, climbing the hills toward Jerusalem. The profits of these ventures, conducted on so magnificent a scale, must have been enormous, and soon the land is rolling in riches. Silver became "as stones"¹ in Solomon's capital, and the king's great men began to vie with each other in the erection of palaces and the laying out of gardens; and commodities which had been previously unknown, grew first into luxuries, and then into the commonest necessities.

But the king had need of all the treasure which his ships and caravans were bringing, for he was even more a builder than his father, David. On the frontiers he erected cities for chariots and horsemen, and fortified many places on the lines of travel toward Damascus and Egypt, believing, no doubt, that he enjoys peace best who is best prepared for war.

In Jerusalem he constructs a new palace for himself and his extensive court, that of David having been altogether outgrown. He builds a great aqueduct, at immense cost of labor and treasure, to bring water from Bethlehem. He completes the fortifications of the city, which David had begun, and renders his city impregnable against any foe. On the mountains of Lebanon he constructs a summer palace, munificent in all its appointments. He lays out great parks at Etham, like the paradises of the Persian monarchs; and, showing that he has regard for something higher than the pleasures of the moment, he builds in the capital city a school, or college, for the instruction of the young.

But his most memorable architectural work was the Temple, the House of God, the building of which had been intrusted to him by his father, and the carrying forward of which he had accepted as a sacred duty. Having the plans which David had prepared, and the vast treasure from David's store, and the voluntary contributions of the princes, it was necessary only to organize the workmen and commence the structure. The site chosen was on Mount Moriah, the threshing floor of Araunah, on which David had erected an altar to commemorate his deliverance. Owing to the narrowness of space at the summit of this hill, it was necessary to provide room for the superstructure and the outlying courts. This was done by building up heavy retaining walls on the hillsides, the inner space being filled with earth to the proposed level of the Temple floor. Much of the stone required was hewn from quarries situated underneath the city. The solid limestone rock which forms the mountain is now honeycombed under Jerusalem with galleries from which the stone has been taken, and in one of these can still be seen a huge block, lying as it was left by Solomon's quarrymen. For the master stonecutters, since there was no one in Israel trained to such labor, Solomon was dependent on his friend Hiram, who gave him skilled stonecutters from Gebal—men who could plan the cutting out of the rough ashlar, and dressing them for their place in foundation or wall. Recent excavations at Jerusalem reveal the character of this ancient stonework. The west, south and east walls of the harem inclosure are laid in cyclopean blocks, without mortar; and, starting as they do from the bed rock, are evidently as they were placed by the Temple builders. Many of them have letters painted in red,² the markings of the architect to indicate their position in the wall. It is a remarkable confirmation of the accuracy of Scripture, that these quarry signs and mason marks are Phœnician characters,³ and have hitherto been found only in Sidon. The timbers for the Temple were cut in Lebanon from the famous cedar groves, were then dragged to the sea, floated in rafts to Joppa, and thence hauled laboriously up the steep slopes to their destination. The heavy metal work, largely in the form of bronze castings for the great laver and the pillars before the porch, was wrought under the supervision of another Tyrian, named like the Phœnician king, but son of a woman of the tribe of Naphtali.

From the moment the corner stone was laid the army of laborers toiled on without cessation. There were 80,000 workmen, under 3,300 overseers, besides 70,000 bearers of burdens. The foundation was laid; the Holy House and its courts were inclosed; the structure was

¹ I. Kings x, 21.

² Conder, "Handbook," p. 316.

³ Harper, "The Bible and Modern Discoveries," p. 351.

beautified with boards of cedar, with carved figures of flowers, palms, and cherubim, all overlaid with beaten gold. Seven years and six months were occupied in the work, during which time "there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron, heard in the house."¹ All the stones had been fitted in the quarries, and were laid in mysterious silence.

"No workman's steel, no ponderous axes rung;
Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung."

When an exploration was recently made of the Temple wall, and a shaft was sunk to the bed rock along its face, a mass of black earth was encountered, evidently a deposit made during the building of the Temple, as it contained jar handles and bits of Phœnician pottery. But there were no chippings of stone, as would inevitably have been the case had not the stone been dressed before being brought to the place. Mr. Harper, of the Exploration Fund, regards this as "one of the most splendid confirmations of the truth of Holy Writ."²

The entire structure when completed was of surpassing splendor. The Holy House was not of large dimensions, since it was intended solely as the dwelling place for the Most High. In consequence, it was but about ninety feet in length, and thirty in breadth, being in each dimension double the corresponding measurement of the Tabernacle. Its form of architecture was most probably Phœnician, although Assyrian influences seem to have been felt in the construction of the brazen oxen to uphold the great brazen sea.

Approaching the inclosure from the eastern side, the beholder entered a colonnade or cloister, which formed the eastern barrier. This opened upon a spacious quadrangle, set with trees, beyond which was a wall, built of stone and topped with a cornice of cedar. Passing up a flight of steps into the inner court, the visitor would observe before him the great brazen altar, the place of the morning and evening sacrifice. It rose to the height of ten cubits, was twenty cubits square, and was approached by an incline. The altar presented an exterior of bronze, but the inclosing fabric held a mass of stones and earth, in accordance with the Levitical requirement. From its height it was readily visible to the worshipers assembled in the outer court. To the left of the observer stood the great brazen sea, the place of ablutions made necessary by the frequent washings of the priests. We here again observe the wisdom of Solomon in his provision of an ample supply of water for the cleansing of the Temple and the altar, after the frequent sacrifices ordered by the Jewish ritual. Vast cisterns had been hewn out of the solid rock, one of which alone was forty-three feet in depth, and could hold 3,000,000 gallons of water.³ Beyond the space occupied by the altar and the brazen sea, on an elevation of the rock, stood the Holy House, with its triple row of chambers, for the use of the priests, at the sides, and with its partition within, dividing the Holiest from the Holy Place. The furnishings of this Sanctuary were the duplicates of those in the Tabernacle, though the one golden candlestick was replaced by ten whose branching arms supported the lamps which shed a soft illumination, which it was the care of the priests to never let die out. Everything entering into the construction or decoration of the Sanctuary was of the costliest material, in token that to God belonged always the noblest and the best.

When the work was at last completed, nearly a year in addition elapsed in preparation for the elaborate ceremonies of dedication. From this time on the services at Gibeon were discontinued. As Bossuet has well remarked, "The unity of God was symbolized in the unity of his Temple," and for this symbolism to be felt it was imperative that all Israel should worship at the single shrine.

On the fourteenth day of the seventh month, in the presence of a vast multitude assembled from every part of the land, the old Tabernacle was brought from Gibeon, and the Ark from its resting place on Zion, and the priests and Levites in solemn procession, the king leading the

¹ I. Kings vi, 7.

² Harper, "The Bible and Modern Discoveries," p. 352.

³ Conder, "Handbook," p. 363.

way, bear the sacred relics to their destination within the inclosure. The trumpets sound, the choir in antiphonal chorus sings the praises of the Lord, and Solomon, spreading forth his hands, utters the prayer of consecration, beseeching God to accept the sacrifice and bless the nation. And when he "had made an end of praying," so goes the record, "the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house." The Shekinah, the wonderful manifestation of the divine glory, which had flooded the Mercy Seat in the Tabernacle of the Wilderness, now lighted the Holy of Holies with its mysterious effulgence, the visible token of the approving presence of the Most High.

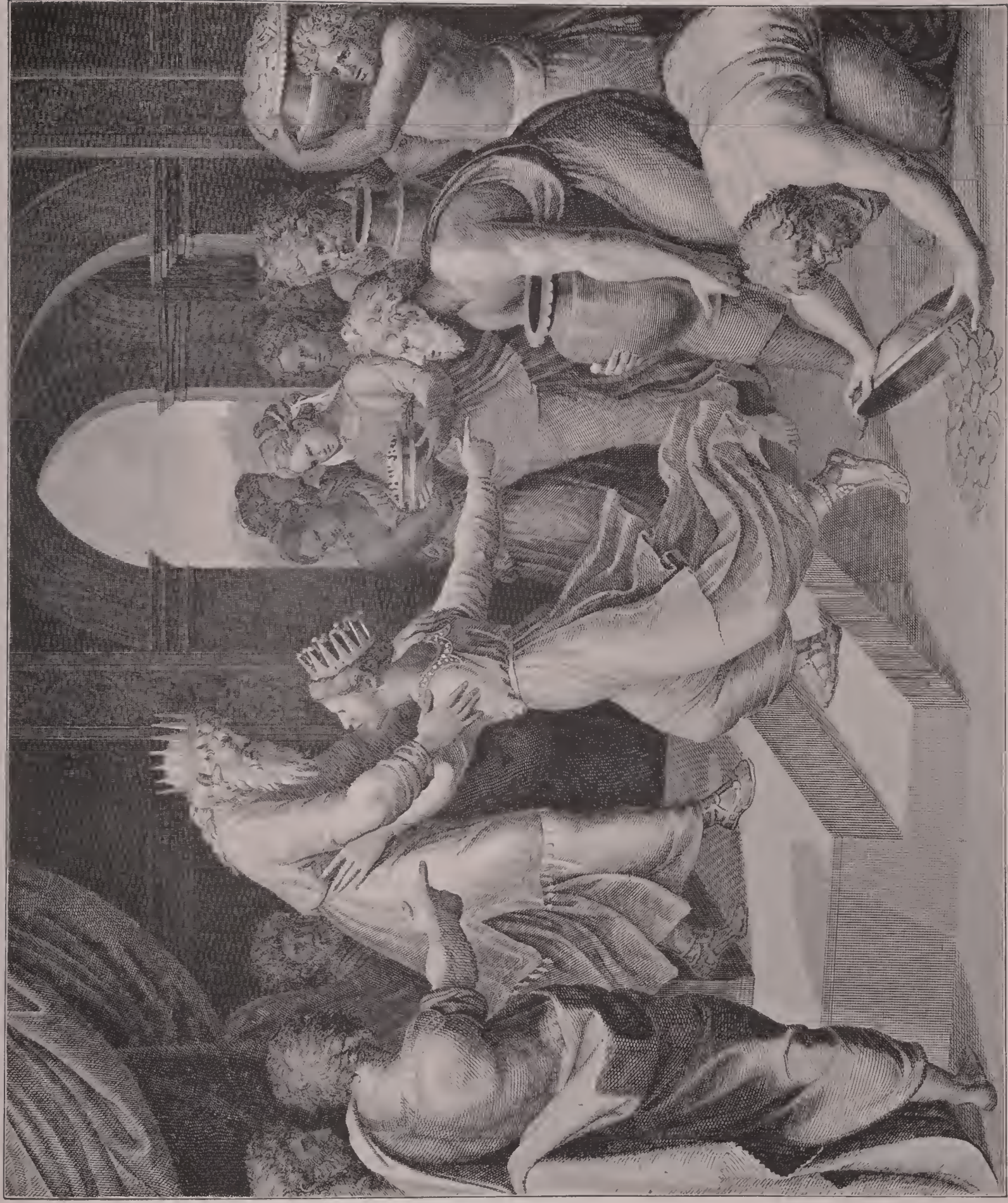
It was the supreme day of Solomon's reign. No other man in the kingdom enjoyed such prominence; for, as king, he represented the majesty of the nation; as builder, he reached the completion of a structure sufficient of itself to immortalize his name; and, as priest, he offered the sacrifices and blessed the people. For the moment he stood as the type of the One King, who, as Prophet, Priest, and King, was to be himself the One Sacrifice for the saving of men.

The wonderful prosperity of the city and the reputation for wisdom of its king soon became a household word among the nations round about. The multitude of his workmen passing to and fro; the caravans of the merchants, the mariners on distant voyages, all carried abroad the glory of his kingdom, till the fame of it filled the East. Great princes were happy to court his favor, and sent him embassies with rich presents, vases of silver and gold, and armor for the soldiers, and rarest spices and balsams, and pack mules, and horses for the cavalry and the chariots.

Some, not content with the hearing, came to witness this splendor with their own eyes. The most notable of these was that princess, whom Scripture and tradition alike name the Queen of Sheba. She came from her home at the southernmost point of Arabia, with an immense train of camels, and bearing the costliest gifts, the rich spices of her country, and a hundred and twenty talents of gold. There are old tales current of her tests for the wisdom of the king—the pearl to be drilled, the diamond with the zigzag hole to be threaded, and the crystal goblet to be filled with water neither from the clouds nor the earth, all of which he solved without delay. And when, besides this, she witnessed the arrangements of Solomon's extensive household, the throngs of officers in waiting, and the bravery of their apparel; and when, still more, she observed the approach by which he entered the House of the Lord, her admiration passed all bounds, and she declared that the half had not been told her. But we may believe that she had better reason to rejoice in the king's wisdom, when we notice the significance of the statement that she came after hearing of the fame of Solomon "concerning the name of the Lord."¹ The wise man and the earnest woman, when "she communed with him of all that was in her heart,"² consulted on the deeper problems of human life, of duty and hope, and of the nature and providence of God. A memorial of this visit was long believed to be found in the balsam trees of Jericho, which, it was said, were propagated from a plant which she gave to Solomon; but a better memorial appears in the ease with which the Maccabeans propagated their monotheistic beliefs in Southern Arabia, the influences of the purer teaching which the Queen had learned of Solomon lingering till that late time.

¹ I. Kings x, 1.

² II. Chronicles ix, 1.



RAPHAEL.

QUEEN OF SHEBA AND SOLOMON.

CHAPTER X.

SOLOMON'S MAGNIFICENCE ON ITS DARKER SIDE.

BUT all this magnificence of Solomon has its darker side. He imitated the royal state of imperial sovereigns ; he copied, also, their vices. It is always perilous for a ruler, or for a nation, to surrender to the seductive influences of foreigners, with their luxurious customs. Persia was stronger in the simplicity of her early virtues, inbreathed with her mountain air, than when with vastly greater resources she had adopted the ways of Babylon. Roman manhood meant conquest ; Roman manhood, enervated by contact with oriental sybaritism, meant decline and overthrow by the barbarian, whose blood was still undefiled. A like peril now confronts America, in the possible incorporation into her life of laxities in thought and conduct which the founders of the nation fled to the wilderness to escape. It is best that a people should live its own life, and that, if it assimilates from other lands, it take only those practices which encourage its youth in virtue. The subjection of the once wise king has its warning for all who are reckless respecting the insidious encroachments on the integrity of American manners and institutions.

It was un-Israelitish for the king to marry the Princess of Egypt ; but, apart from the precedent, she seems to have brought no particular evil in her train. At the time of her espousal Solomon had serious scruples about lodging her in the city, on account of the proximity¹ of the Sacred Ark. Clearly, therefore, at that time the objection to her coming was confined to her own alien faith ; and as for her conduct afterward there is no intimation of her having introduced either a priest or an altar of her ancestral worship.

But not content with the single wife, Solomon takes princess after princess from the surrounding nations, until he builds up a harem, in the sharp characterization of Lenormant, already "scandalously full,"² by the influx of a horde of strange women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Hittites, and Sidonians. Drawn away from the simple purity of his faith in God by their influence, he presently sanctions strange worship in his city, and also for himself offers sacrifice to the Sidonian Ashtoreth, to the Ammonitish god Milcom, and to the bloodthirsty Chemosh of Moab.

But this uxorious polygamy, with its resultant relapse into the abominations of idolatry, carried another grievous evil in its wake. To maintain this vast seraglio, with its multitude of servants and eunuchs, of singing men and singing women, involved an extravagance of expenditure that might bankrupt any kingdom. If these pampered creatures of the court may not have said, like the luxurious nobility of France under Louis XV., "After us, the deluge," they were certainly assisting to bring it on. However justly the king might desire to rule, in the constant drain to which the royal exchequer was subject, the scepter must bear with increasing weight upon the necks of the people.

It is an ominous picture—that of 153,000 slaves, torn from their wives and children, and forced to toil in the quarries of Jerusalem or the forests of Lebanon—but it illustrates the callousness for human suffering which existed in the king's heart at an early period, and which augmented with the natural growth of his necessities. The bitter complaints which the men of Israel preferred to Rehoboam respecting the severity of his father's taxings³ suffice to prove that the sufferings of the people were almost intolerable. The splendor of the throne had cast

¹ II. Chronicles viii, 11.

² Lenormant & Chevalier, "Ancient History of the East," I, p. 145.

³ I. Kings xii, 14.

its shadow upon the nation, and the extravagance of the palace had resulted in a practical despotism,

“The despotism of vice —
The weakness and the wickedness of luxury —
The negligence — the apathy — the evils
Of sensual sloth — produce ten thousand tyrants,
Whose delegated cruelty surpasses
The worst acts of one energetic master,
However harsh and hard in his own bearing.”¹

Some intimations of his decline came to the king in his later years. The buoyancy of the people, which had been sustained by the early prosperity of the kingdom and the unity of the national faith, was visibly declining. Under the sun of luxury the rank weeds of effeminacy and presumption had been growing in the hearts of the young men until there was a large class that scoffed at the prudent restraints of their fathers. In a dream Solomon is warned that his kingdom shall be divided because of his apostacy; and Ahijah, the Ahilonite, by an impressive rending of his garment, prophesies to Jeroboam that God has given to him the leadership of ten out of the twelve tribes of Israel. At a hint of the aspirations of the young man, Solomon sends to apprehend him, but he takes refuge in Egypt, to return thence after Solomon's death and set up his kingdom over the northern tribes in Shechem.

For the rest there is little to say. The chroniclers, who realize that there is little to edify in the king's later years, pass them in silence. Possibly the tales that are current in the East of Solomon's control of the djins of the under world have their basis in his attempting the incantations of magic, and dealing in thaumaturgies and incantations. So Victor Hugo, in his “Solomon,” makes him say,

“Child of guilty kisses,
Vast, gloomy is my wisdom: demons shun
To take between high heaven and their abysses,
A judge but Solomon.”

But this silence of Scripture respecting one whose morning promise was as the sun rising in his strength, is condemnation. If Solomon was the wisest man, we regret that he failed to put into practice his best intuitions. He was great, and yet, when we compare him with his father, it is a question if the latter was not the greater man. David organized a kingdom out of chaos, and transmitted it to his successor, strong in its peaceful power. Solomon accepted the kingdom, with all its accumulated treasure, and turned it over to his successor, splitting already with the cleavage lines of dismemberment. Graetz, the Jewish historian, alluding to the oriental tales which credit Solomon with the possession of magical powers, remarks that his kingdom was “like a world of magic, upbuilt by powerful genii. The magic vanished at his death. He did not bequeath to his son his magic ring.”²

But as regards influence on the world of mind, while the impression wrought by the magnificence of Solomon is the more brilliant, that wrought by the earnest piety of David is far greater. The one erects the Temple of stone and costly cedars, the admiration of a few passing ages, but which the breath of wars and the torch of the destroyer have laid in the dust; the other in his psalms has constructed a temple of thought and devout consolation, which is more enduring than time itself.

On still another count the thoughtful mind experiences more satisfaction in contemplating the poet-king. If he turned aside from the path of virtue in a single instance, we are happy to feel that he sincerely repented, and that his going out of life was departure into the glory of a happier state. But we do not possess this gratifying assurance respecting David's illustrious

¹ Byron, “Sardanapalus.”

² Graetz, “History of Israel,” I, p. 366.

son. We are told that he sinned; we are nowhere told that he repented. The Book of Ecclesiastes expresses intelligence of the true wisdom, but it does not convince us that its author followed his own teachings. Farrar has called to mind Oscagna's great picture in the Campo Santo at Florence, in which "Solomon rises slowly and painfully out of his sepulcher at the archangel's summons, ignorant whether to turn to the right or the left, uncertain whether his place is to be among the saved or the lost."¹

But whatever the great king's final destiny, if the workman be saved while the work perish; if it shall prove, as in Browning's optimistic thought, that

"A sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
That after Last returns the First,
Though a wide compass round be fetched;
That what began best, can't end worst,
Nor what God blest once, prove accurst;"²

still we must regret the errors that shadowed a life of magnificent promise, and transformed its closing picture into the text of a sermon on the "Vanity of vanities," rather than a glowing panegyric on the wisdom and the virtues, which should have brightened with the flight of years.

¹ Farrar, "Solomon, His Life and Times," p. 162.

² Robert Browning, "Apparent Failure."

Montgomery



DAVID AND ABIGAIL.

BOOK VIII.

FROM THE DIVISION OF THE EMPIRE TO THE LAST OF THE KINGS.

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BOOK VIII.

FROM THE DIVISION OF THE EMPIRE TO THE LAST OF THE KINGS.

CHAPTER I.

THE DISRUPTION OF THE NATIONAL UNION.

THE history of ancient nationalisms must forever possess a fascinating interest to the student who would know the true and divine philosophy of the world's salvation and progressive enlightenment. No chapter, however, in the long and diversified annals of antiquity presents a more interesting and important subject for the religious mind to contemplate than that which records the origin, development, and decline of the Jewish empire. Unjustly treated as the Jew has been by so-called civilized peoples during all these Christian centuries, the record of that same Jew, the literature, the religion, the great and righteous ancestors of that Jew, are exercising upon this age and upon the civilization of it a more potent influence than the literature, religion, biographies, and national annals of any other race.

Of all that vicissitudinous Jewish history no period is more sadly and significantly instructive than that from the division of the empire to the Babylonian Captivity. This may be called the decline and fall of the Jewish empire. Wonderful, indeed, and beyond parallel, was that national progress of Israel. Three royal administrations—the reigns of Saul, of David, and of Solomon—bring the kingdom to the summit of its greatness. One hundred and twenty years of statesmanship and of providence lift these institutionless tribes of shepherds and agriculturists up to a nationalism whose unity, power, and prosperity become the astonishment and admiration of the world. At Joppa, the harbor-gate of Jerusalem, halts the rich commerce of the seas. Thither the sons of Javan drive the vessels of Corinth with merchandise of brass and corn; the servants of Hiram come with the ships of distant Tarshish “bringing gold and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks;” the fleets of Ezion-Geber fetch the fine gold of Ophir and precious stones of India, and the mariners of Sidon guide the cedar rafts and purple-laden galleys of old Tyre. At Jerusalem's crowded gates wait the caravans which bring to her thriving mart the wines and wools of Damascus, the perfumes of Arabia, the sweet spices and rare gems of Ethiopia, mayhap the costly silks from the looms of Assyria and China, and fine linen from Egypt, with horses and chariots. “King Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.”

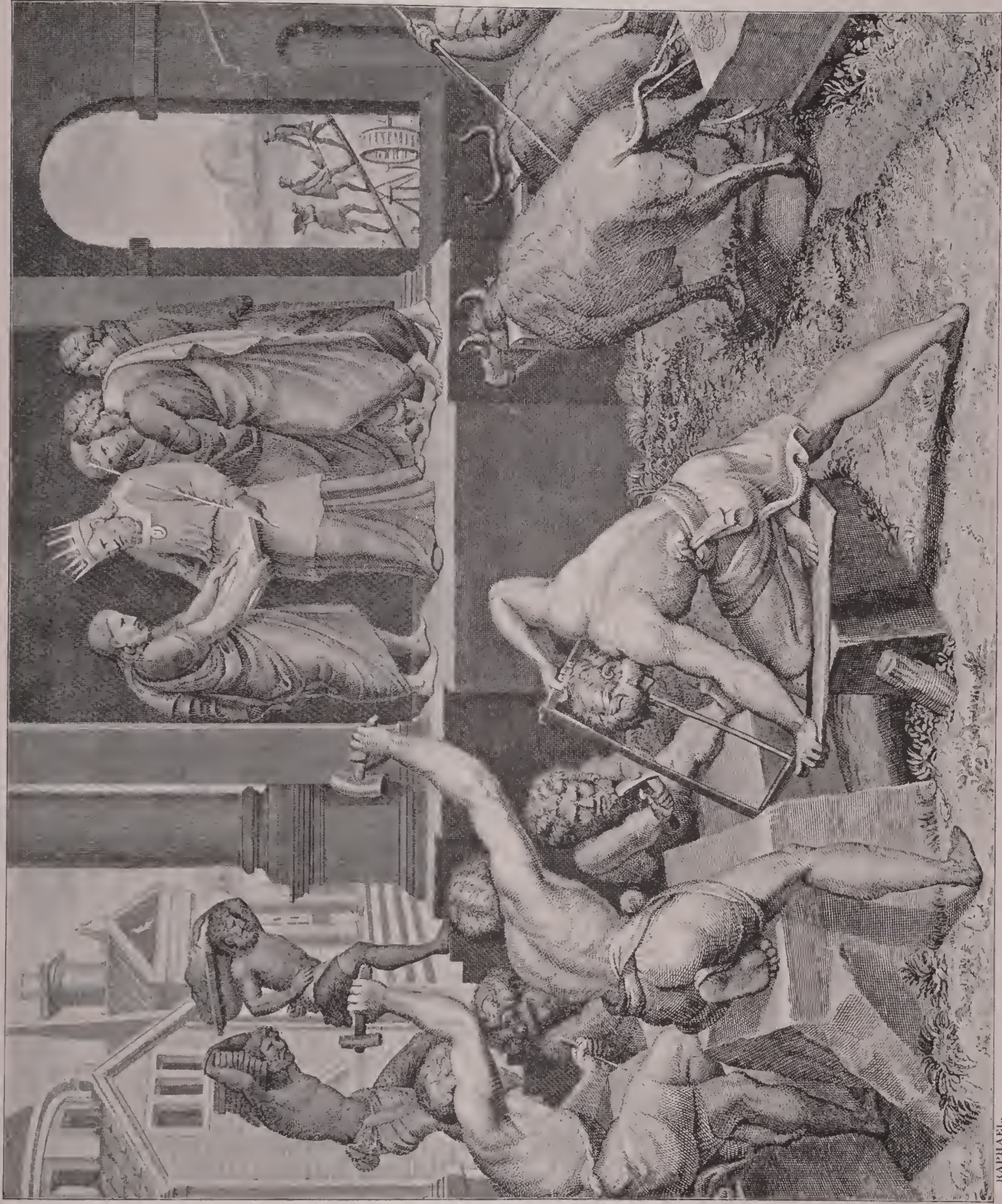
With all the glory of Jerusalem's material prosperity is mingled the light of a superlative intellectualism and the splendor of a divine revelation. Although Homer is singing his “Iliad” to the Greeks, and Cheops is building the great pyramid at Gizeh, and Thebes and Memphis hold the mysteries of mighty faiths and noble sciences, “all the kings of the earth seek the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom that God hath put in his heart.”

Alas, that this unwonted national brilliancy should vanish like a meteor and be followed by the night and storm! How true is it, as the poet has sadly learned from human history, that it is “the most difficult of tasks to keep heights which the soul is competent to gain!” and true

it is of nations as of men. Swiftly did Israel gain the heights of national prosperity, but, like Lucifer, she fell from her proud eminence to ruin and contempt. This is not a unique national experience of sudden decline from united power to disruption, and from honor to shame. Parallels may be found in the histories of Babylon, of Athens, and of Rome. Of untold magnificence was the reign of Nebuchadnezzar when Babylon became the golden head of the great image of empire; but, though her power spread from the Tigris to the Nile, and in all the arts of peace she rose to a prosperity which was a marvel and a proverb, her supremacy was maintained for only seventy years, and with the ignominy of Belshazzar's overthrow her name became a by-word and her greatness but a memory. That golden hundred years of Athens which witnessed the art triumphs of Phidias, learned the sublime philosophy of Socrates and Plato, applauded the eloquence of a Pericles, hailed the dramatic genius of Sophocles — opened with Marathon and closed with Thermopylæ — was, like the age of Solomon, suddenly plunged into corruption and chaos. Rome exulted in the rise of her proud empire, in the all-conquering sword of Julius Cæsar, the eloquence of Tully, the songs of Virgil and Horace, the wisdom of Seneca, and the taste of Augustus, claiming the dominion of the civilized world from Ethiopia to the Danube and from the Euphrates river to the Atlantic main. But the superiority of her arms, the elegance of her manners, the splendor of her art and letters, and the universality of her dominion scarce exceed a hundred years of history ere Rome trembles with the premonitions of her decline and fall. So soon, alas, may the national vigor be exhausted and the pride of a mighty race be humbled.

The spirit of discontent and rebellion was rapidly developing before Solomon's reign of forty years terminated. In his degeneracy the illustrious son of David not only formed alliances with many strange women and idolatrous nations in violation of the theocratic constitution, but he also heaped oppressive burdens of labor and taxation upon the people. Having lost that early spirit of devotion which made the building of the temple a willing religious service, the people now looked back upon those levies and those toilings in forests and quarries as hardships and oppressions for which Solomon must be held responsible. To men who have surrendered their religious convictions and turned to a demoralizing and deintellectualizing idolatry, what had formerly been done for conscience sake and for the glory of the national religion was now reckoned as servitude, wrong, and oppression. Here were men, and the children of men, who had made up the levies ordered by Solomon for the building of the temple. Thirty thousand had gone to Lebanon; 70,000 became bearers of burdens; 80,000 were hewers in the mountains. Hardships were, doubtless, suffered by these 180,000 laborers not unlike the hardships which were borne by the 360,000 men who toiled through twenty years in the construction of the great pyramid in Egypt.

With all the wealth and enlightenment of the age, the people had their grievances, real or imaginary. At the very time when the temple was the joy of the whole earth, and when silver was as stones in Jerusalem, as at the time when Rome was grand with marble palaces and rich with the tribute of subjugated nations, or as when Athens was flourishing and prosperous in the brilliant age of Pericles, the people were losing, if they had not already lost, their ancient liberties and were being robbed of a just remuneration for their toil. The displeasure of God, kindled by the idolatrous tendency of the times, and the discontent of the people, inspired by oppression, were very manifest. Ahijah, therefore, the prophet of the Most High, found a willing listener and apt pupil in Jeroboam, the champion of the rights of the common people, a man of mighty valor and of industry. The prophet, by a most dramatic illustration, taught Jeroboam his own destiny and the fate of the kingdom. He met the future king on the highway and, without a word, snatched from his shoulders his new garment, tore it into twelve pieces, handed him ten of the pieces and indicated by an act more eloquent than words that God was thus to tear the kingdom into fragments and destroy the national unity of the chosen



BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.

people. He indicated further that Jeroboam was to lead the ten tribes in revolt and become their king while but two tribes were to remain loyal to the house of David.

This startling prophecy soon reached the ears of Solomon, who set about to thwart the purposes of God by laying plans to kill Jeroboam, whose valor and industry had heretofore commended him highly to the king's favor. The son of Nebat, this stalwart Jeroboam, with dreams of royalty and with a new-born ambition for power, found it convenient, as it was certainly most discreet and politic, to visit Egypt and seek the protection of King Shishak I.

Prophecies, however, were out which were not to be recalled. The partition of the kingdom of David was inevitable. Rebellion, like subterranean fire intensifying its power for earthquake and volcanic eruption, was destined to culminate in revolution. The death of Solomon brought national affairs to a crisis. The elevation of Rehoboam, his son, to the throne, was the signal for the revolutionary fulfillment of Ahijah's prophecy. Jeroboam hastens up from Egypt, still the champion of the people as against the tyrannical oppression of the house of David. As the leader of the growing and politically justifiable rebellion he demands reforms from the new administration which will relieve the people of the heavy and galling yoke imposed on them by Solomon. The conditions were not wholly unlike those which later on in Rome called forth the patriotic Gracchi to champion the oppressed middle and lower classes against the prosperous nobles. Nor did they entirely differ from those conditions which gave Cromwell his opportunity in England. There was at least a call for a Gracchus or a Cromwell; better still, for a Washington. It is true, there was no purely political constitution in existence at that time guaranteeing the rights and liberties of the people. Royalty was absolute. Nevertheless, the people, even so early in the history of government, believed in the right of petition, and when they presented their grievances to Rehoboam they would have been as clearly justified in demanding of him certain guaranteed rights and privileges for the people, and certain checks and limitations to royal prerogative, as the barons of England were in demanding them of King John. Had the highest wisdom prevailed and righteous political ethics been recognized, the result might have been a Magna Charta, which would have preserved the unity of Israel, while Shechem, the scene of this conference, might have become Israel's Runnymede. But no, Rehoboam spurned the petition of the people. Though the old men of political experience who had formed his father's cabinet counseled moderation and reform, the hot-headed young men whom he had called about him advised out-and-out oppression, urging Rehoboam to the tyrannical and despotic utterance: "My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did load you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." If the people's grievances had heretofore been imaginary, they now were real. And as in the days of George III., the American colonists had their petition for right of grievance ignored and their burdens increased until they were forced to the Declaration of Independence, so the children of Israel were driven by the spirit of haughty tyranny to utter their Declaration of Independence in the memorable words: "To your tents, O Israel."

The catastrophe of national partition came with that shout of the people. In vain did Rehoboam send Adoram, his chief officer, to arbitrate with the rebels. In the insane rage of the moment, that wronged and insulted people stoned the king's messenger to death. This act showed clearly the determination of the revolutionists. Thenceforth, God's chosen people were two nations, at enmity with each other, with God, and with the world. Rehoboam had tested the temper of the people to the loss of his chosen officer and now hastened for personal safety to Jerusalem.

The ten tribes elected Jeroboam king of Israel, while Judah and Benjamin followed Rehoboam, the hereditary king of the house of David. The division of the Jewish monarchy



IDOL WORSHIP.

was without doubt the most significant event in the history of that people since the establishment of the monarchy, if not since the original conquest of the land. Rehoboam, though graced with few virtues, was sensible enough to comprehend the terrible meaning of this great revolt against the house of David, and hence he could have possessed but a craven and unkingly spirit had he instituted no measures for suppressing the rebellion and restoring the unity of the empire. With an alacrity, demonstrative of military genius, he marshalled an imposing army of 180,000 warriors to fight against the house of Israel, put down the rebellion, and restore the power of the Davidic dynasty. Imagination cannot depict the horrors which would have attended a war between these two angered, almost frenzied, sections of one great people. It was a merciful providence that interposed and prevented a most bloody and unnatural strife between brethren. Shemaiah, the prophet of God, revealed heaven's opposition to a conflict of arms; and in the name of the Lord bade the army of Judah disperse and every man go to his home, declaring that this calamity of national partition was of God. War was providentially averted. Nevertheless, in spirit, in their rivalries, ambitions, and hatreds, it may be said: "There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days."

We now look upon the formation of the new kingdom of Israel. Whether Rehoboam fully understood the power of the Temple or not, certainly Jeroboam was shrewd enough to see that the most potent influence that would in the no distant future operate to bring the hearts of the rebelling tribes back to the national union was that Temple in Jerusalem and the sacred things it stood for. Can there be a doubt, whether Rehoboam was wise enough to discover it or not, that, but for the cunning of Jeroboam, the chosen people's national religion, the faith of their fathers, embodied in the sublime symbolism of the Temple and its worship, would have proved more powerful than armed legions in subduing rebellion, producing a reaction and finally securing a restoration of the national unity? Jeroboam was sagacious enough to see that if the people who had revolted should continue to worship at Jerusalem, their hearts might turn again to the faith of their fathers and they would be drawn back by their religious convictions to the house of David. To prevent this, a new religion was necessary, a national religion whose symbols and worship should be located within the national domains, easy of access to all the people, and where they could worship without visiting Jerusalem, at which place they would surely fall under the fascinating influence of the grand old faith. If they are to maintain their independence, they must sever their religious connection with the Temple as well as their political relations to the house of David. If they are to be a great nation of internal homogeneity and of recognized national autonomy among nations, they must have at the heart of their nationalism a religion. It must be distinctively a state religion. From it royalty must derive its authority, patriotism its inspiration, law its sanction, and the body politic its homogeneity. Jeroboam understood this, and he immediately set about counteracting the subtle, silent, and powerful influence of the Temple by making it unnecessary for the ten tribes of his kingdom to go to Jerusalem to worship. He introduced what may be called a composite worship in a mixture of Hebrew and Egyptian symbolisms. He had just returned from Egypt where he had been impressed with the idolatry represented in the symbol of the golden calf. In the olden time the children of Israel had felt the powerful influence of the same cultus, for, when Moses tarried in the mountain and the people in the Wilderness became restless, there seemed to be a demand for some visible manifestation of divine presence, for some image or symbol of supernatural power. Aaron, to satisfy this unspiritual demand, fashioned the golden calf before which the people worshiped as, doubtless, many of them had been taught to do in Egypt. Jeroboam, not satisfied, as was Aaron, with one golden calf, made two, not with a polytheistic idea that the divine is multiform, but with the political idea that the people must be accommodated, and the place of worship must be made as convenient to the tribes as possible. Therefore, he set up one golden calf at Dan, in the north, and another at Bethel, in

the south. The entire elaborate system of the idolatrous worship of the bull-image was established with temples, altars, priests, and sacrifices. Jeroboam was too politic to forsake the entire Mosaic system; such a revolution would have shocked the people and would have created a reaction in favor of the old faith. He instituted a composite religion by mixing the idolatry of the bull-worship with the observances and priestly ministrations of the Hebrew religion. The feast of tabernacles was observed at the temple built on the heights of Bethel. The priests of this new religious ceremonialism were not recognized as of a special class or order, but were chosen from among the people of the lower classes and as they volunteered or offered themselves. Jeroboam did not profess to introduce an entirely new religion but to restore the old faith of the fathers and the worship of Jehovah, who had delivered them from Egypt and led them safely through the Wilderness. He did not claim to introduce new gods, but he represented the bull-image as the symbol of the true God. His sin lay in his transgression of the fundamental law of the theocratic constitution, the representation of God by an image. His sin was like that of Aaron, which caused the anger of Moses and the destruction of the golden calf in the Wilderness. The people seem to have acquiesced in Jeroboam's false notion that the golden calf was an image and symbol of Jehovah, although Jeroboam was held responsible for leading Israel into this sin of idolatry. All through the subsequent history of the kingdom, Jeroboam was made to carry the blame for Israel's departure from the true Jehovah-worship, and for her sin of idolatry. On the introduction of the bull-worship and the new method of choosing priests, many who had followed the political standard of Jeroboam rebelled and returned to the house of David and the temple worship. This false step taken by Jeroboam and followed by the people, brought upon Israel the displeasure of God. At the beginning of its history as a new and distinct monarchy the prophecy of Israel's calamities and destruction was delivered by Ahijah, the very prophet who had foretold the division of the kingdom of David and the elevation of Jeroboam to the throne of Israel. God's anger was manifest in the incident of the altar of Bethel, when Jeroboam's arm was withered as he raised it against God's prophet and the altar was rent according to the prophet's word. Although the king's arm was restored by the intercession of the prophet, and the prophet himself was slain by the lion on account of his own disobedience, Jeroboam did not learn the lesson which these experiences and incidents were designed to teach. Though the curse of God had fallen upon the idolatrous altar of Bethel and upon the houses of the high places in the cities of Samaria, the king continued to maintain the false worship which he had introduced and which was eventually to destroy the house of Jeroboam from off the face of the earth. The religion of Jeroboam was to him a political expedient; he supported the idolatry which he had introduced for political reasons. He had not, nor had many politicians of that day, accepted the canon which Daniel O'Connell, in his day, recognized, that what is morally wrong can never be politically right. A test of Jeroboam's real faith in the conglomerate religion which he had established in Israel came when his son, Abijah, fell sick. Then was it that Jeroboam sent his wife not to Bethel, not to Dan, not to the high places of the cities of Samaria, but to Shiloh and to the good old prophet Ahijah. Trouble tests his false religion and it fails him. He seeks the ministry of the religion of his fathers. His idolatry is but an hypocrisy; it may deceive the people, but the king knows it is false — a cruel sham and mockery.

The faithful wife and mother hastens in disguise to Shiloh. Ahijah's prophetic eye pierces the disguise she wears; he knows the woman to be the wife of Jeroboam. He meets her with "heavy tidings." Not only is the godly child Abijah to die, but the curse of God is to rest upon the house of Jeroboam, and the kingdom of Israel is to be uprooted and ended. In the fearful threatenings poured forth by the prophet that utter disappearance or annihilation of the ten tribes seems to be foretold, which in its realization has been regarded as one of the greatest mysteries of history.

CHAPTER II.

JUDAH AND HER KINGS.

AS we turn to trace the fortunes of the house of David from the calamitous division of the kingdom, we look upon as sad a record of religious degeneracy as Israel was making under the administration of Jeroboam. Judah turned to an idolatry even more degrading than the worship of the golden calf. This had been tolerated even in Solomon's time and became more widespread and deeply rooted under the reign of the weak and almost pusillanimous Rehoboam. The house of David had lost national control of the ten tribes of Israel as a punishment from God for the foreign alliances made by Solomon, which had introduced these corrupt forms of worship, yet neither Judah nor her king seemed disposed to profit by the lesson. The temple service was continued, it is true, and Rehoboam never permitted any heathen cultus to supplant the state religion. But the various forms of idolatry were tolerated by the State, the people supported them and became the devotees of symbols whose meaning it would be most indecent to explain. With the introduction of these corrupt and corrupting idolatries came from the surrounding nations the most abandoned creatures that debase society, poison the public morals, and bring reproach to the national name. If there be proof anywhere it is here, that, though "Righteousness exalteth a nation, sin is a reproach to any people." Surely forsaking God and the spiritual worship of the one Infinite Spirit led these nations into the most degrading sins. Their idolatry bore the bitter fruit of the grossest immoralities. The abandonment of the faith of their fathers was the surrender of the purity, honor, greatness, and prosperity of their fathers. National enervation followed national sin. Rehoboam had been on the throne but five years when he was attacked by a foreign power, his armies defeated, his capital taken and his kingdom plundered. "Shishak, the king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem."

It is quite reasonable to suppose that Jeroboam, the ambitious and revengeful king of Israel, planned this Egyptian foray upon Jerusalem. He had been a voluntary exile in Egypt before the partition of the kingdom and had there enjoyed the confidence and hospitality of Shishak. He may have incited the Egyptian king to this ambitious enterprise of conquest and spoliation, and he doubtless rejoiced in its success. It is just as probable that Shishak found it necessary to execute some bold stroke to stay his own tottering power and restore the ancient prestige of Egypt by the conquest of the greatest city in the world. He must have seen his opportunity just when the nation had been divided, and while only Judah and Benjamin would resist him. He could count on the sympathetic neutrality, if not the active coöperation, of the ten tribes of Israel.

Egypt had long been waiting for an opportunity to swallow up this nation which had made so great a history in the north. It had been awed by the power of Solomon, who had eclipsed in fame her greatest Pharaohs. The glory of Solomon had now passed away, but the cupidity of a Shishak was excited by dreams of the untold richness of the Holy City, which had never yet been plundered, and of the marvelous value of the gold-embellished temple, which had never been despoiled of its sacred and costly treasures. The weakness of the dismembered kingdom of Solomon was the tempting opportunity of Egypt. Shishak brought to this invasion a formidable army of 1,200 chariots and 60,000 horsemen, besides an innumerable host of foot soldiers. The power of Judah was not able to resist this mighty tide of Egyptian conquest. The fortified cities fell before the attacks of the invaders and Shishak marched in triumph to Jerusalem, where he plundered the temple and the national treasures, and took

away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made. These shields and targets, made by Rehoboam's father when Jerusalem was at the height of her prosperity, numbered no less than 500. Of these, 200 contained 600 shekels of beaten gold and 300 contained three pounds of fine gold apiece. The value of these shields has been variously estimated at from \$200,000 to \$2,000,000. But when we consider the fabulous richness of the temple, and of the treasure which Solomon must have left his son and heir, it would be difficult to overestimate the value of the spoils which Shishak secured at Jerusalem. Solomon's annual importation of gold has been estimated all the way from \$2,000,000 to \$20,000,000. Of this gold he made the shields and targets, overlaid his ivory throne, plated the twelve lions that stood by the steps of the throne, formed the elaborate drinking cups and royal plate. The treasures of the temple consisted of the vessels, altars, tables, candlesticks, lamps, tongs, bowls, snuffers, basins, spoons, door hinges, and censers of pure gold, which Solomon made. To these were added the silver and gold vessels which David had dedicated. It will be remembered that David prepared for the temple 100,000 talents of gold, and 1,000,000 talents of silver. By some writers this gold and silver of David's treasures has been calculated at the enormous value of over four billions of dollars. Though this may be an extravagant estimate, and though the invader may have spared many a sacred vessel, and may have left much of the beauty of the temple uneffaced, still rich with its golden glory, there can be no doubt that Shishak found the treasures of the temple and of the royal house of sufficient value to glut his ambition and vastly enrich his own depleted treasury. It would seem that the Egyptian's object was plunder rather than conquest, although the offended God had permitted his invasion as a punishment to the house of David for its idolatries, and had put a limit to his ambitious depredations on account of Judah's repentance. The record of this invasion by Shishak was preserved not only by the Jews, but also by the Egyptians. It was of sufficient historic importance, and its results were of sufficient credit and honor to Shishak and to Egypt, to warrant its preservation in elaborate record on the walls of Karnak. There, Egyptology, in this distant age, translates from mysterious hieroglyphics the eventful annals of that olden time.

Perhaps nothing more strikingly shows the rapid decline of Jerusalem from the age of Solomon than the fact that Rehoboam, robbed of his treasures, made shields of brass for the royal guards to take the place of the golden shields captured by Shishak. It was symbolic of the sudden decline from the golden age to the age of brass.

Rehoboam reigned seventeen years; Jeroboam of Israel survived him five years. Abijah, the son and successor of Rehoboam, however, took up the cause of Judah and the very next year after his father's death prepared to engage in war with the kingdom of Israel. The long-smoldering fires of enmity were to break forth. Judah had been greatly humbled and impoverished by the Egyptian invasion, but during the ten or twelve succeeding years she had rapidly recovered and now Abijah was able to put an army of 400,000 valiant men into the field. Jeroboam's superior strength was immediately manifest by a quick levy of twice as great an army as Abijah's, and 800,000 mighty men of valor were ready for the conflict. It doubtless seemed that the numerical superiority of Israel's forces must be sufficient to daunt the courage, quench the ambition, and check the warlike inclinations of Judah. But, nothing daunted, Abijah led his forces to the conflict, prefacing the battle with an oration which might have been a credit to Demosthenes when hurling his invectives against the Macedonian Philip. He claimed to be fighting for the cause of God and the faith of the fathers against a nation which had rebelled against both. He went to battle neither fearing the superior strength of his enemy nor placing his confidence in Judah's valor, but crying: "God himself is with us for our captain." In spite of the strategy of Jeroboam, who surrounded the army of Judah with a skillfully planned ambush, Abijah led his valiant men to signal victory and proved, as has often been proved in history, the fallacy of the epigram: "God always marches with the

heaviest battalions." This battle was Jeroboam's Waterloo. Of the 800,000 mighty men of valor who entered the field 500,000 perished — more than the entire army of Judah. Victory was with the weaker army because they relied upon the Lord God of their fathers. Jeroboam never recovered from this blow, and he survived the terrible defeat but three or four years.

While Abijah's project of subduing the rebellious tribes and restoring the unity of the divided nations failed, he brought great prestige to the house of David and prepared the way for a revival of Judah's ancient glory. Though Abijah reigned but three years, he displayed a remarkable and manifold talent. He was an orator, a statesman, and a general of consummate ability. Although he followed his father in sin, he greatly excelled him in genius. While his zeal for the faith of the fathers and for the cause of God may have been more patriotic and political than spiritual, certain it is that he had the wisdom to see that national idolatry meant national ruin, and the violation of the fundamental law of the theocratic constitution was fatal to peace and prosperity. Hence, his eloquent, thrilling cry of warning from Mount Zemaraim: "O children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers; for ye shall not prosper."

The faithful in Judah, who had not forsaken the worship of Jehovah for the heathen cults which had been introduced since the days of Solomon and his alliances with the Pharaohs, may have had evil forebodings on the ascendancy of Asa to the Davidic throne. He had been educated in idolatry by a mother, or queen-mother, who lent her royal patronage to the support and propagation of a system of idolatry the most unchaste and degrading imaginable. It would not have been unreasonable for the people to expect Asa would yield to the influence of Maacah, especially as he came to the throne in youth. Alexander the Great, though resenting her political interference, admitted the power of his mother's tears, and Charles IX. of France who sanctioned the St. Bartholomew massacre carried out the cruel behest of his mother, Catherine de Medici. What may not young Asa be instigated to do by that idolatrous queen-mother, is doubtless an anxious question by many a patriot in Jerusalem. But Asa, more like young Edward III. of England, who broke away from Isabella's intriguing influence and deprived her of both her power and her liberty, found it necessary to degrade his queen-mother from her royal position and to institute a crusade against the idolatrous abominations which her patronage had done so much to encourage and establish. For ten years after Judah's signal victory over Israel tranquility and prosperity came to the house of David. During this era of peace Asa prosecuted a relentless warfare against idolatry, uprooting the heathen forms of worship and the immoralities attending them, and bringing the people back to the worship of Jehovah. This religious reformation was attended by an industrial revival and a regeneration of popular patriotism. By the natural laws governing the affairs of men this renewal of prosperity and patriotism must ever follow a moral awakening. The idolatries introduced among the people led them to sins of drunkenness and licentiousness which not only enervated them, but also indisposed them to labor and economy and robbed them of the power and the mind to work. When poverty followed idleness and excess, softness and drunkenness, the love of country perished — perished with the love of righteousness and the love of toil. But when a religious revival brought the people back to the good, old-fashioned habits of temperance, honor, and chastity, there followed a new physical life, a new spirit of activity which took to honest industry and the creation of new national prosperity. With peace and plenty smiling upon a land once more basking in the light of God's favor, Asa proceeded to put into practice the political maxim formulated in later ages: "In time of peace prepare for war." Asa, possessing a talent for statemanship and sovereignty equal to his genius for religious and social reform, fortified the cities of his realm. He thereby gave the regenerated spirit of industry an opportunity to bring contentment and prosperity to the people. This king, moreover, formed an army of nearly 600,000 men. His military foresight was demonstrated at the close of the



DAVID ROBERTS.

ENTRANCE TO TOMB OF THE KINGS.

ten years of peace during which he had given the people work to do in building and fortifying his frontier cities. Zerah the Ethiopian, led an army 1,000,000 strong against Judah. This Egyptian army was made up of about the same elements that composed the forces of Shishak—largely Ethiopian. Zerah had doubtless been inspired with the ambition of conquest by the success of his great-grandfather, Shishak the Egyptian, who, years before, had captured Jerusalem and carried away great spoil. The Ethiopian, however, found Judah better prepared to resist foreign invasion than at any time since the days of Solomon, and he met in Asa a military genius such as Shishak did not meet in Rehoboam. Moreover, there had been a great religious reformation since the days of Rehoboam, and the people had been inspired with the ancient faith in God and now went to battle under Asa as Joshua's men, and David's legions, and Gideon's band, and Abijah's army went to battle—in the name of the Lord of Hosts. We now again find the historians using language similar to that which made the old records so eloquent—the language that celebrates the providential deliverance of God's people: "The Lord smote the Ethiopians before Asa and before Judah." As Alexander the Great with less than 50,000 men met the Persian host of 1,000,000, and swept them from the plain of Gaugamela like chaff before the wind, so, in the valley of Zephathah, Asa met the overwhelming odds of the Ethiopian host, and drove them before his prayer-strengthened legions, and destroyed them as if they had been leaves to a tornado or stubble to the flames. Not content with merely resisting the Ethiopian invasion, Asa almost literally carried the war into Africa. He invaded the Philistine country and pursued the routed and panic-stricken forces of Zerah as they retreated toward Gerar, capturing the cities as he swept along with the mighty swing of conquest. With great spoil the victorious army of Judah returned to Jerusalem to be greeted with the universal acclaim which voiced the patriotic joy of the people. This battle in the glorious valley of Zephathah was the only instance in which the Hebrews ever met and defeated the army of a great nation in open field battle, and it must remain an ever-memorable event in the annals of the chosen people.

The monuments of Egypt again seem to give us corroborative evidence of this important invasion in the time of Asa. One of the monuments found in the ruins of Bubastis, in Lower Egypt, bears the record of an invasion of Asia, including Palestine and Syria, by the great-grandson of Shishak I. The time of the invasion comes within the forty-one years of Asa's reign at Jerusalem, and although the Jews gave the invading king of Ethiopia the name of Zerah, which was a common name to them and signifying "the rising sun," the Egyptian records indicate that this would-be conqueror, this new, ambitious "rising sun," was Usarken I. or Usarken II. Champollion, who had not access to this recently discovered record of Bubastis, nevertheless argued that Zerah might have been an Egyptian king of an Ethiopian dynasty. Other scholars have supposed that Zerah was but the general of an army which had been largely recruited in Ethiopia and sent out to invade Syria and Palestine. Asa's splendid victory received the approval of God through his prophet Azariah, who went to meet the king and his army as they returned in triumph from the war. The success which God had granted his arms inspired Asa with still greater zeal for the extirpation of idolatry and the restoration of the true national religion. Idolatry was forbidden, and the worship of Jehovah was enforced by the most severe laws. Upon no form of idolatry did Asa vent his iconoclastic indignation with greater zeal than upon the indecent system to which his queen-mother was devoted. The renewal of the reform which Asa had inaugurated with his elevation to the throne was attended and followed by another season of prosperity, while peace once more blessed the land for many happy years.

When Asa was again called upon to resist a threatened encroachment upon the national rights of Judah he had to deal with the regicide Baasha, who had assassinated Nadab, annihilated the entire house of Jeroboam, and usurped the throne of Israel. Baasha conceived the

project of preventing all international trade and communication by building Ramah, a sort of frontier guard-station, a fortified eminence overlooking the country north of Jerusalem. This ambitious usurper may have had dreams of conquest, and the building of Ramah may have been but the first step taken toward an invasion of Judah and the capture of Jerusalem. Be this as it may, the self-crowned king of Israel found more than his military equal in Asa, who successfully defeated his peculiar international policy, scattered Ramah as by a cyclone, and with the debris rebuilt and fortified Geba and Mizpeh.

Although Asa was once more successful in his military operations, he offended God and contradicted his own record by seeking the assistance of Benhadad of Syria. The zeal of his youth seems to have declined, or his long reign of peace and prosperity must have had an enervating influence upon him, so that he neither had the confidence in his own military strength nor the faith in God by which, without any foreign aid, he had met and repulsed the Ethiopian invasion. Long and prosperous was this reign of Asa, and, although in the last years the king was sorely afflicted with the gout, brought on possibly by high living to which the peace and prosperity of the land were the temptations, he had accomplished a great work for the cause of true religion and for his country which was recognized by the people in the pomp and magnificence of the ceremonies with which he was laid to rest in the City of David.

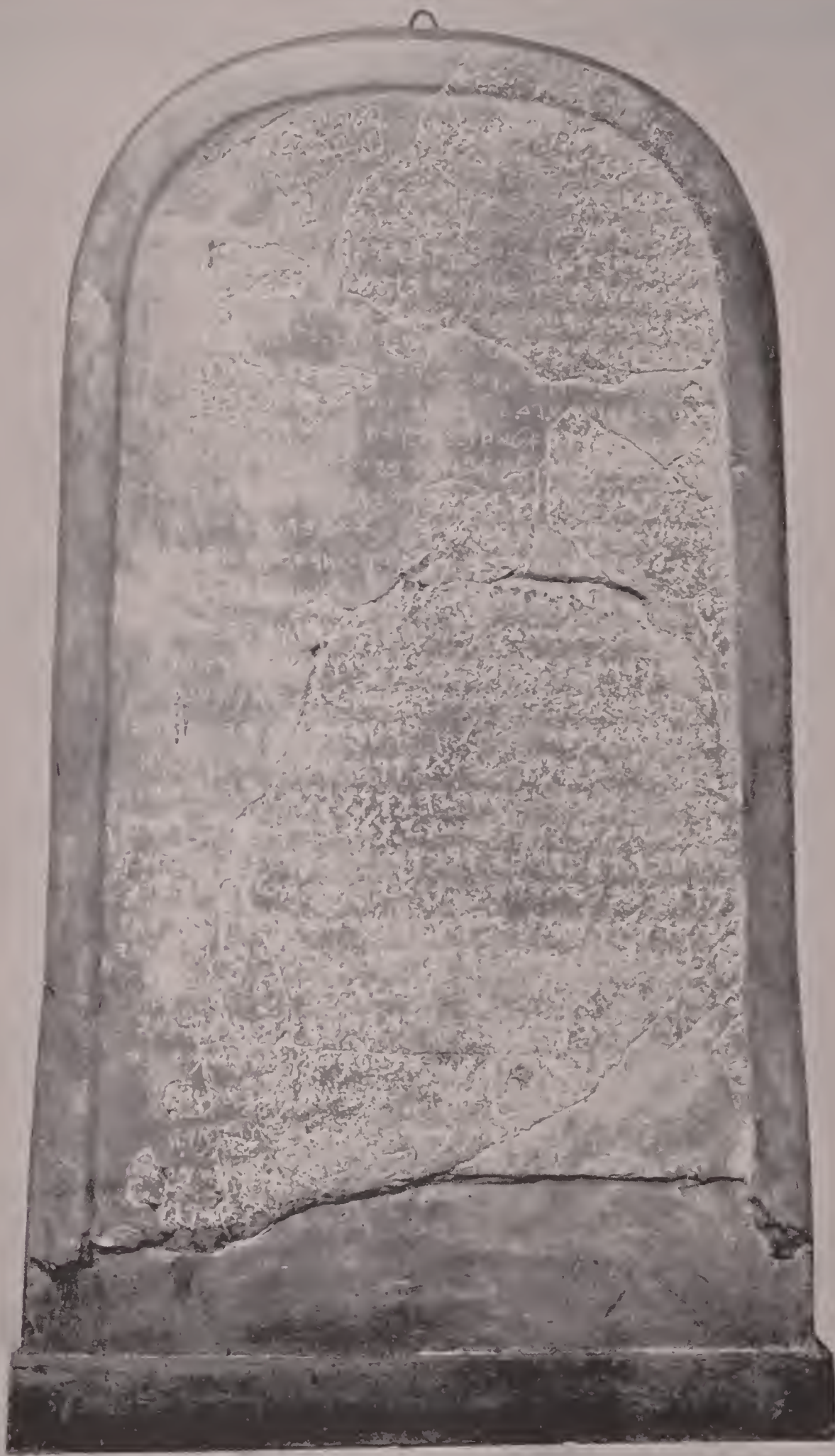
The sun of prosperity which had so gloriously risen on Judah did not decline with Asa's death. His son Jehoshaphat proved to be a worthy son of an illustrious father. When Edmund Burke listened to William Pitt, the younger, as he entered the British Parliament, he exclaimed: "It is not a chip of the old block, it is the old block itself." So might one have said of Jehoshaphat, the son of Asa. Not only did he display military talent and sagacity equal to his father's, but he also caught the same spirit of progress and reform. Moreover, this enlightened king understood the power of books and the influence of the teacher. He inaugurated an educational movement by sending teachers of the law through the land to instruct the people in justice, patriotism, and religion. He organized a perambulating common school, an itinerant college, or a national university extension movement.

Jehoshaphat saw, as Luther saw centuries after, that a permanent reformation must be based on a universal intelligence, and that good government must find its pledge of support and perpetuity in enlightened reason and educated public conscience. Luther, it is said, brought the schoolmaster into the cottage of Germany. The Reformation brought the schoolhouse into the community. When the Pilgrims came to New England, side by side with the forge, the church, the home, they planted the common school as early as 1647. The security of this American republic and the stability of the British empire have been guaranteed by the universal intelligence of a people who have maintained an enlightening and civilizing educational system. In addition to the educational methods which Jehoshaphat adopted, he rehabilitated the judiciary of the country. The courts were purified, and by a very wise civil service judges were chosen for their probity and righteousness. By a correct internal economy and international policy trade revived and commerce flourished, wealth increased and prosperity, both temporal and spiritual, blessed the nation as it had not been favored since the division of the original kingdom. This was the bright renaissance of Judah. With its wealth, enlightenment, and progress along all the lines of civilization it reminds us of the later age when Lorenzo de Medici was at the head of the Florentine republic, while commerce, art, and letters came to such a splendid development that Italy was recognized as the intellectual torch-bearer of the nations of awakened Europe.

The influence of Jehoshaphat's reign was felt by the surrounding nations, and the Philistines and Arabians paid him willing tribute for the moral and intellectual, no less than for the commercial, benefits which they acknowledged had come to them by his liberal and enlightened administration.

For the first time since the dismemberment, attempts were now made to establish amicable relations between the two great divisions of the kingdom. Jehoshaphat and Ahab formed an alliance and the king of Judah went on a visit to the king of Israel in Samaria, where he was received most royally and entertained with the hospitality befitting his high station and his universal renown. Some such magnificence may have characterized the meeting of these kings in the bright noonday of their prosperity as story relates of the meeting of Henry VIII. of England and Francis I. of France on the field of the cloth of gold, when kings vied with each other in the generosity of their courtesies and in the lavish display of their riches and honors. It was doubtless with the most worthy motive of strengthening the good feeling between the two nations and with a view to their future peace and reciprocity that Jehoshaphat consented to join Ahab in the vain and fatal attempt to take Ramoth Gilead from the Syrians. Still later, and in the same spirit of good will to Israel, Jehoshaphat yielded to the entreaty of Jehoram, king of Israel, and assisted him in his attempt to subdue the rebellion of Moab. In this patriotic effort to suppress rebellion the prophet Elisha gave the kings assurance of success. This assurance, however, was given for the sake of Jehoshaphat rather than of Jehoram, for, although Elisha was a prophet of Israel, not of Judah, he was inimical to Jehoram's idolatrous policy and in hearty sympathy with the reformatory spirit and policy of Jehoshaphat. It was doubtless the assistance of the king of Judah that would enable Israel to hold Moab, for in this support the help of Elisha and of Elisha's God would be secured. Jehoram had driven Mesha, the king of Moab, to his fortified capital, Kir-haraset, but was unable to prosecute a successful siege without the aid of the king of Edom and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. Even then the allied armies were threatened with defeat by the drought until Elisha prophesied a providential deliverance by a miraculous supply of water in the ditches for the famishing men and beasts. The morning saw the fulfillment of Elisha's prophecy in abundance of water flowing through the ditches from the direction of Edom. Here was wrought a twofold deliverance: the water supply saved the allied armies from perishing and the appearance of the water deceived the rebels into making a fatal blunder. As the sun rose and shone upon the water in the ditches it gave it the appearance of blood, and Mesha supposed it meant that the allied kings had gone to battle among themselves and this blood was flowing from the field of carnage. Thus deceived, he ordered not an attack of arms but a rush for the spoil. The Moabites in a great mob, without order or discipline, threw themselves upon the allied forces only to be annihilated. Mesha, determined to escape from his capital, rallied a little band of only 700 desperate followers and, with drawn swords, made a gallant dash for liberty, but they were hurled back by the king of Edom. Then in desperation the defeated king, to the astonishment and horror of his victorious enemies, offered his own son and royal heir as a burnt offering on the wall of Kir-haraset. It was enough to fill the allies of Israel with indignation. The forces of Judah and Edom turned and left the field, forcing Jehoram to raise the siege and give up the attempt to suppress a rebellion, which, after all, seemed quite justifiable. Was the withdrawal of Judah equivalent to the withdrawal of God's favor and the revocation of Elisha's prophecy of success? Moab had been oppressed by the exorbitant taxation of Israel and doubtless had a just cause in striking for independence. Those simple shepherds of Moab had paid to Israel a bankrupting tribute of 100,000 lambs and 100,000 sheep with the wool, and they could stand it no longer; hence their attempted independence.

Archæology again becomes the handmaid of history in the discovery of the Moabite stone on which is preserved the record of this conflict between Moab and Israel. For nearly 2,800 years this stone, inscribed with characters similar to those in which David and Solomon wrote, has stood as a monument of Moab's successful rebellion. To this distant time it becomes, even in its fragments, an unimpeachable witness to the veracity of the Hebrew Scriptures. This priceless relic of antiquity was discovered at Dhiban in the land of Moab in 1868; it had been



A FACSIMILE OF A PLASTER CAST OF THE MOABITE STONE IN THE LIBRARY OF
CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

known to the Arabs, doubtless, from time immemorial and was made known to a German missionary, Rev. F. A. Klein, by an Arab sheik. When found, the stone, four feet long and two feet wide, containing about 1,000 words, in thirty-four lines, was in a remarkably fine state of preservation. But when the French and Prussian consuls entered into a rivalry to negotiate for the purchase of the monument and thereby excited the cupidity of the Arabs and Turks, the Arabs, in revenge for the interference of the governor of the region, heated the stone with fire and then threw water upon it which caused it to burst into pieces. These pieces, however, were collected by French and English travelers and explorers, and, finally, at the suggestion of Dean Stanley, the English turned the fragments in their possession over to the French. Now, in the Louvre, the stone of cemented fragments is preserved. Fortunately, a squeeze of the stone had been taken before it was broken, and thus the record in its unmutated perfection was secured. This stone, bearing its inscription in Phœnician characters, written before Homer's time, records the deeds of Mesha, king of Moab, the oppression of Israel and the rebellion of Moab against that oppression. It preserves the names of cities mentioned in the Book of Numbers and which existed 1500 B. C. and were still flourishing 900 B. C., but have since disappeared. It is, moreover, in remarkable geographical harmony with the Scriptures of the Hebrews. While this stone mentions names of kings and of peoples found in the Bible, it also preserves a record of the vastly important fact that the worship of Jehovah dates back of 900 B. C. and was well known by the surrounding nations to be the religion of Israel.

Archæology has also apparently discovered the site of Kir-haraseth, the capital city of Mesha, which was besieged by the combined armies of Israel, Edom, and Judah, and on whose walls the king offered his son as a burnt offering. The difficulties which Jehoram and Jehoshaphat encountered in their vain attempt to put down the rebellion of Moab are accounted for in the very situation of Kir-haraseth. It is an inland Gibraltar; a natural fortress, almost inaccessible. Hence, while the invading army was able to "beat down the cities" as they drove the Moabites before them, and on every good piece of land cast every man a stone and filled it, when they came to the capital, to which Mesha retired, it is said: "in Kir-haraseth left they the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about it, and smote it." The discovery of this city throws confirmatory light upon the history of Israel's attempt to subdue the Moabite rebellion.

As those Moabites felt justified in their rebellion against Israel for levying upon them a crushing tax or tribute, after the destructive but ineffectual attempt which had been made to bring them to submission, they seem to have harbored a feeling of resentment against Jehoshaphat for interfering and assisting Jehoram. The memory of the unjust interference rankled in their hearts until they planned in revenge an invasion of Judah, with an allied army of Moabites, Edomites, and Ammonites. The news of the approach of this vast army filled Jehoshaphat with consternation and, though he could have put an army of 1,000,000 valiant men into the field under command of his five experienced generals, he proclaimed a fast instead and went to prayer. All Judah stood before the Lord. The remarkable prophecy comes that they shall not need to fight but simply to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. Little did they realize what the next morning would reveal to them. Jehoshaphat gave a most remarkable order. He appointed not archers, not slingers, not great generals, but singers! He then commanded them to lead on the hosts of Judah with the voice of praise, singing, not of bravery, nor of country, nor of war, but singing of the beauty of holiness and of the mercy of the Lord. It calls to mind the event of our own times when the German legions in the late Franco-Prussian war rushed into battle singing Luther's well-known hymn:

"Ein' Feste Burg ist Unser Gott,"

or of Cromwell's Ironsides at Naseby and Marston Moor marching to the conflict singing the Psalms. But, unlike the German legions or the Puritan Ironsides, the army of Judah had not

to strike a blow. As they advanced toward Engedi and came near to the watchtower in the wilderness they were startled by the awful spectacle which greeted them. The battle had been fought. The field was strewn with the slain. The invading army was completely annihilated. When the hosts of Judah began to sing, the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, against whom the Lord had set ambushments, began to slay one another, and the carnage continued among themselves until all were slain or had fled. This remarkable event filled the surrounding nations with awe, inspired them with a wholesome reverence for Jehoshaphat and the house of David, and ushered in a new era of peace, prosperity, and happiness, such as had not been known for seventy-five years.

CHAPTER III.

THE APOSTASY OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL.

HOW has it fared with the ten tribes of Israel since Jeroboam's death? The spirit of rebellion which had created the revolt against the house of David became a menace to the stability of the new kingdom as soon as its founder passed away. We see in the history of Israel a parallel of Imperial Rome after it had begun its decline. Idolatry is attended with social degeneracy, licentiousness, drunkenness, intrigue, assassination, and even suicide in high places. Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, reigns but two years when rebellion breaks out and he is assassinated by Baasha, the general-in-chief of his army. After this regicide usurps the throne he exterminates the house of Jeroboam. So speedily is the prophecy of Abijah fulfilled and Jeroboam's dynasty ended.

Baasha was succeeded by his son Elah who, like Nadab, reigned but two years when a conspiracy was hatched against him and, while he was drinking himself drunk, Zimri, the captain of his chariots, assassinated him and usurped the throne. Zimri exterminated the house of Baasha. Thus did history repeat itself and the house of Baasha was destroyed as Baasha had himself destroyed the house of Jeroboam. This extinction of the house of Baasha was foretold by the prophet Jehu. Zimri reigned but seven days. He was declared a conspirator and usurper. Omri was elected king by the soldiers and immediately marched against and captured the city of Tirzah. Zimri, losing heart and seeing the fortunes of the day turn against him, set fire to the royal palace and miserably perished in the conflagration. A conflict now arose, evidently between the civilians and the soldiery, as to who should assume the crown. The people were divided between Tibni and Omri. Civil war ensued and there was danger of the kingdom of Israel breaking to pieces. The very spirit that created the division between the ten tribes and the house of David threatened now to disrupt the new monarchy. It had been with the greatest difficulty that this people maintained their unity. Their kings had found it necessary to tax their ingenuity to the utmost to prevent a reunion with Judah. They had to invent a religion, build temples to rival Solomon's, attempt to construct fortified cities between the two nations to guard against the intercommunication of the people, and, with all this, it demanded the best genius of their rulers to preserve internal peace and secure a homogeneous body politic. Several times in this sad history Israel seemed on the very brink of national disintegration, if not of vicious and brutal anarchy.

It happened here, as it often happened later on in Rome, that the civilians and soldiery were in political conflict. The most cruel and destructive results came from these clashings of civil and military interests. As between Omri and Tibni it was an unequal contest. The soldiery usually won the day at Rome. The soldiery won the day in Israel. Tibni and his

civilians, at best but a volunteer army of raw recruits, unused to arms, were not able to stand against Omri and his well-armed, disciplined men of war; therefore, the quaint old record very significantly says: "So Tibni died, and Omri reigned." How dark, cruel, and terrible is this history of Israel! How vividly it calls up the later history of the Roman emperors, a race of imperial sots and assassins! Caligula reigned less than four years and was murdered in a conspiracy. Claudius reigned twelve years and was poisoned. Nero committed suicide after a reign of fourteen years. Galba was assassinated seven months after he assumed the purple. Otho committed suicide at the end of three months. Vitellius was executed after reigning eight months. Domitian ruled fifteen years, but was then assassinated. Commodus was strangled to death in his bed at the end of a twelve years' reign. Pertinax was beheaded ere he had been emperor three months. Then the throne was offered to the highest bidder at auction. The successful purchaser, Didius Julianus, lost his head at the expiration of two months. Surely these two pictures, though separated by a thousand years, resemble each other in their dark, cruel, and bloody aspects and show with what struggles and agonizings humanity has found its way to social enlightenment, to just government, and to universal brotherhood.

We have found the name of Omri on the Moabite stone, cut thereon 900 B. C. He was the soldiers' king and came to the throne by the twofold power of the ballot and the sword. His reign was characteristically military. He saw with a soldier's eye that Tirzah was not the best location that could be chosen for the capital of the empire. David had displayed true military wisdom in planting the capital of the United Kingdom at Jerusalem. Omri, with equal sagacity, saw the military advantage of the hill of Samaria, purchased it, and there built the city to which he transferred the seat of government. With a taste for war rather than for the higher and more refined arts of peace, Omri permitted the nation to sink deeper and deeper into the abominations of idolatry, and, as though the wickednesses which he tolerated were too gross to be put upon record, the historians seem to pass by his reign of twelve years with averted faces, content with declaring him to be the most dissolute and heathenish king that had as yet disgraced the throne of Israel. The nation plunges swiftly to its fall. The apostasy comes to its climax of impiety and reaps its most vicious harvest in the reign of Ahab. This degenerate son of a degenerate father seems inspired to out-Nero Nero and make the sins of his predecessors insignificant as compared with his own enormities. He marries Jezebel, a Zidonian, and introduces Baal worship as the national religion and associates with it the worship of Astarte, the Assyrian Venus, with the groves, the high places, and the Baal temple with its altar and ceremonialism. The worship of Jehovah becomes a thing of the past, and with that pure, spiritual worship have vanished the sturdy righteousness, the chastity and honor which in the days of old made men proud to boast that they were Israelites.

Virtue, however, had not utterly disappeared except from high places. Now and then a brave, great soul appears like a star breaking through the universal cloud, or a comet shooting, bright and glorious, athwart the impenetrable gloom. The people, however, do not long remain wiser and purer than their leaders. Can a Pericles, a Nero, a Lorenzo de Medici, a Louis XIV. become licentious without corrupting the social body? Do not the Athenians ape their leader? Do not the Romans, high and low, plunge into Claudian vices? Do not the Florentines, from the workshop to the convent and from the kitchen to the nunnery, catch the infection of Medicean worldliness? Do not the Parisians in all ranks of society take their cue of immorality from the reigning Bourbon? And do not the Israelites look to Ahab and Jezebel for instruction in unrighteousness? Wickedness had strengthened itself in the alliance of an Ahab and a Jezebel. Society's tendency to corruption increases tenfold when a corrupt and vicious woman becomes the power behind the throne. The immoral influence of Aspasia upon Pericles and Athens has been looked upon as more subversive of the social integrity and the national honor, even in the Golden Age of Grecian culture, than the calamity and demoralization of

political intrigues and of war. The Roman republic fell, not before the ambition of a Julius Cæsar, but before the shameless profligacy which had become fashionable through the influence of Marc Antony, who had been bewitched by the voluptuousness of a Cleopatra. The Claudian orgies which set the fashion for social Rome of imperial times were the invention not only of the bestial Cæsar but also of his almost inhuman consorts, Messalina and Agrippina. Louis XIV. was not alone responsible for the fact that during his reign in Parisian society "the ten commandments were at a pretty pass." There were such profligate powers behind the throne and surrounding it as Montespan and her associates.

The Zidonian Jezebel was the power behind the throne of Israel — the idolatrous, licentious, wicked power. All society was poisoned and corrupted by her influence. "If the blind lead the blind, both fall into the ditch." There is not only a ditch, but a yawning, bottomless gulf of chaos and destruction opening before that God-forgetting, Baal-worshipping nation, and they are blindly, madly rushing into the chasm, following the fashion in vice set them by Ahab and Jezebel.



THE PROPHET ELIJAH.

CHAPTER IV.

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE.

NOW is the time for the appearance of a great man. He is the offspring of a common and imperative need. He is rocked in the cradle of national peril and nursed at the bosom of angered righteousness. A great reformer is the child of an important, critical, transitional epoch. He is a Noah when the floods threaten universal devastation. He is a Joseph when the famine stalks abroad. He is a Moses when oppression crushes and the time is ripe for a mighty exodus. He is a Daniel when the conqueror's yoke becomes heavy. He is a John the Baptist, to preach repentance and herald a new kingdom. He is an Alfred or a Charlemagne when empires must be lifted from the shifting sands and planted on new and sure foundations. He is a Savonarola to rebuke the worldiness of the age, and save the letters, arts, and manners from corruption. He is a Wycliffe, a Huss, a Luther of protest when ecclesiastical tyranny is riveting shackles on human conscience and reason. What an age was this! Truth bound to the stake; Religion on her face and weeping in the dust; Morality a laughing stock; Virtue an outcast; Error wielding the scepter; Unbelief wearing the crown; Vice victorious; Crime, conqueror; the gulf yawning; the times drunk with idolatry and licentiousness; the nation doomed. It is the time for the appearance of a great reformer. And he comes. He appears suddenly as if he had just stepped from a chariot of fire, let down out of heaven. Suddenly, as a thunderbolt, he leaps into the presence of the king. A strange man with an eye to make kings quail; heavy brows; long, thick hair flowing over his back like a lion's mane; a girdle of leather about his loins; a mantle of sheep skin thrown across his brawny shoulders; a voice that has learned its elocution from the thunder—"Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead." This is the first appearance of this remarkable man, who looks as if he has power in him and a purpose. He utters but one sentence: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew or rain these years, but according to my word," and he is gone. One blinding flash of lightning, and Ahab is left alone there, trembling like Belshazzar, later on, when he saw the writing of his doom on the palace wall.

Elijah was no diplomat of the Talleyrand school; no oily policy characterized his methods. His words had a "siss" to them, like hot bullets; his manner was quick and blunt, like a cannon's. He had the courage to bring an unwelcome message, to hurl a bombshell of rebuke right into the royal palace and into the midst of the idolatrous foolery of the times. He put all he had to say on that first occasion into one sentence. They sometimes get a great deal of danger into one torpedo. Ahab must have thought so when that sentence struck his conscience: "As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew or rain these years, but according to my word."

Like John the Baptist, this Elijah was an ascetic, a recluse, a stern, uncompromising man, full of moral iron, and powder, and electricity; sent into the world evidently to explode; to blow things up and to turn the world upside down. There must have been some such consternation in the City of Samaria as Savonarola created in Florence, when, with his thunder-toned eloquence, he predicted famine, pestilence, and war, as the punishment of God upon the worldly city and its sinful people! An English statesman said at the close of his career: "Were I to begin life again, it would be as an agitator." Elijah began his life as an agitator and was a reformer from the first day he unsealed his volcanic lips in holy rebuke and retributive prophecy.

Here is an incarnation of the grand conviction, "the Lord, he is God." He is set against the degrading idolatry of his time. The worship of Baal was an offense that stirred his heart to fiery indignation. It was not enough that he should utter solemn warnings; he must prophesy calamities and judgments. The very clouds obey him, as the sun and moon of old were obedient to the command of Joshua. He is in league with the God who rules the heavens, whose power can turn a garden to a desert waste or transform a barren land to fruitfulness. God has spoken through men only to be unheeded; now he will speak through nature in answer to his servant's prayers. The rain and the dew are withheld from the pastures and vineyards of Israel; the lilies wither in the valley and the roses fade on Sharon's fertile plain; the vine droops fruitless on the sunny slopes of Carmel and the pools become stagnant and dry before the panting flocks, while drought, famine, and death stalk through the land. During the drought God takes care of his prophet; he has still other work for him to do. "I will command the ravens to feed thee," is his promise. The miracle by which the barrel of meal and cruse of oil of the widow of Zarephath failed not during the long famine, and the still more wonderful miracle by which the widow's dead son was restored to life were but incidental. Elijah did not come to perform miracles, as the Christ did not; these were incidental to their ministries and confirmatory of their divine authority. Elijah, by the display of this miraculous power, became sufficiently accredited as a prophet of Jehovah. Not only the widow of Zarephath, but every man and woman in Israel, even unto Ahab and Jezebel, should by this manifestation of power be able and willing to say: "Now, by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth." This Elijah is to speak again. A second time he faces the king to denounce his idolatry, to show the hollowness of the Baal-worship and to demonstrate the genuineness of the Jehovah religion. There is a serious misunderstanding between the prophet and the king. Ahab indignantly charges Elijah, the prophet, with the trouble into which the nation has been plunged, too blind to see that these woes are the result of his own wickedness. He has been sowing to the wind and is now reaping the whirlwind. Jezebel has helped to sow for this harvest of calamities. She has introduced indecent idolatries, brought the priests of Ashtoreth to her own table, killed the prophets of God, and instigated the destruction of the altars of the divine religion. But Elijah had been felt. From Bethel to Dan and from the royal palace to the humblest shepherd's cot, that name "Elijah" had become a terror in the land. There was a spirit of inquiry abroad; calamity had set the people to thinking, questioning, reasoning, and there seemed to be a growing disposition to discuss the philosophy of their serious national condition. This was a good sign. Undoubtedly Elijah understood the temper of the people when he issued a challenge to the whole nation to come and discuss the situation. Ahab was enough of a politician to see that in accepting the prophet's challenge he was but voicing the sentiment of the restless, suffering, discontented public. Elijah throws down the gauntlet to all the priests of Baal and to all the priests of Jezebel's abominable and indecent idolatry. The great question shall be decided in the presence of all the people. No closed doors; no tickets of special invitation—except to the priests of Baal, and they come 450 strong. The cunning prophets of the groves remain away. But all the nation come; no tent can hold them; no temple is large enough to give them standing room; they swarm up the dry slopes of Carmel, pouring in from all the land. It is a strange multitude, wan and hunger-pinched. Their flocks are perishing; their land has yielded no harvest; their horses, mules, and beasts of burden, all are dying. A commission has been sent forth to gather forage, but all in vain. Carmel is yellow; the plains are parched and the valleys are streamless with the drought. The people come by hundreds and by thousands, anxious to see and hear this prophet who foretold their calamities, and whose word kept the heavens closed against their flocks and fields. And now, only one man stands up against the world to defend the truth, to prove the divinity of Jehovah-worship, to confound the

champions of infidelity and to overwhelm the powers of a demoralizing, nation-ruining idolatry. The learning of the land is against him; the wealth of the land is against him; the political power of the land is against him; and the people of the land are against him.

“There stood one faith against the whole world’s unbelief.”

It is one of the most dramatic scenes of human history, with the mountain for the stage, Elijah and the priests of Baal for the actors, and a whole nation as awe-struck spectators. The prophet, with a magnificent faith and courage, thunders forth the startling proposition: “The God that answereth by fire, let him be God.” At last the people speak; their pent-up feeling breaks all the barriers of restraint; they have been conquered by the majestic confidence of the prophet, and with excitement they cry in response to the fair, logical, eloquent proposition: “It is well spoken.”

In that far-off time there was to be a demonstration of Abraham Lincoln’s homely axiom, “You can fool some of the people all the time, you can fool all the people some of the time, but you can’t fool all the people all the time.” The people had been fooled long enough. They now demanded that something be proven and settled. Halting between two opinions must cease. The challenge is accepted, the altars are prepared with their sacrifices. The priests of Baal have the first argument — they lead the debate. They cry to Baal for a demonstration of his power; they cry and slash themselves with knives and in frenzy leap upon the altars. From morn till noon and from noon till night they make a spectacle of themselves before the assembled nation. In the midst of their cries of frenzy, a loud, almost hilarious voice is heard above the din. Elijah mocks them. For once his grim countenance relaxes; his sides shake with the laughter of triumphant ridicule, and he fairly roars out: “Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.” One of the few witticisms of sacred record, but a masterpiece of sarcasm and a telling argument. The people must have felt its overwhelming logic. Raving, panting, cursing, bleeding, and despairing, the priests of Baal desist in very exhaustion. No fire has come from heaven. Breathless, the weary, wan, and long-wronged people wait on the mountain as the shades of evening gather over the land. It is the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, a ceremony of hallowed, historic associations, recalling blessed memories of the olden time. Do not the spirits of the fathers hover about the mount? Does not the very air palpitate with the agitated feelings of the people? Do not 10,000 sad, penitent hearts pour their faith and longing into Elijah’s prayer as he stands by the altar and lifts his voice to the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel? There shall be no frenzy, no cursing, no slashing with knives, no leaping upon the altar, no waiting long and weary hours. A calm, majestic prayer, lifting poor Israel up to God, and all the mount is lighted up with the glory of celestial fire. The altar, with its sacrifice, has been consumed. One mighty shout that makes old Carmel tremble, then all is still and dark. The people are on their faces, and — “the Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God!” The pretensions of idolatry have exploded, the teachers of error have been confounded and slain. Baalism is, for the time, shattered and the people have at last come to their senses.

Three long, weary years have passed since Elijah predicted the drought. All this time the prophet has been a hunted man. Once more he is called to deliver a divine message to the people. On this occasion he carries a very different prophecy — he is to make the joyful and welcome announcement of the coming of rain. Good news to the thirsty land! On this happy mission was he bound when he met the king and invited the nation to the controversy on Carmel. The people have acknowledged Jehovah with one universal shout, and now the prophet’s voice is heard, thrilling as a trumpet’s peal, “there is a sound of abundance of rain.” Not a cloud in the sky, nor had there been for three years; not the faintest sound of the most distant thunder! Ahab could not hear the sound; the poor, famishing people could not hear

the sound; the perishing flocks could not hear the sound, but Elijah heard the sound of abundance of rain. Ahab went to eating, but Elijah went to prayer. Doubtless Ahab would rather eat than pray, but Elijah would rather pray than eat. It was the praying that brought the rain. Napoleon once said, "Stomach rules the world." Ahab, doubtless, believed it long before. But Elijah was proving that conscience, faith, and prayer had a place in the world's government and in the shaping of its destiny. The man of prayer is the man of power. Ahab was the typical man of appetite; Elijah, the typical man of prayer. How differently they seem impressed with the demands of the hour! Nero fiddling over burning Rome is not more detestable than Ahab feasting, when he, too, should have been praying for his people and his country. In the darkest day at Valley Forge, Washington is found kneeling in the snow of the forest absorbed in prayer, and in the gloomiest hour of the American civil war, Abraham Lincoln is found in his room at the White House on his knees before God. The men who stand nearest God, stand nearest the people and the country, and prayer may succeed after powder and plow have failed. The fire has leaped from heaven in vindication of the truth, and the champion of the truth. The people are on their faces in repentance, and the prophet of Jehovah is on his knees yonder on Carmel's height commanding the clouds to empty their treasures into the valleys and the kindly heavens to bathe the thirsty hills with dews. The order was sent to Ahab to hasten down the mount as fast as his chariots could bear him before the rain should stop him. Then Ahab and Elijah started for Jezreel. Ahab in his chariot, Elijah afoot; the eating man riding, the praying man running. There is no evidence that Ahab invited the weary but triumphant prophet up into his chariot, as the Ethiopian eunuch long after had the good breeding to do to Phillip. But the prophet kept ahead of the chariot for sixteen miles to the entrance of Jezreel.

It might now be supposed that Elijah would be the most popular man in Israel, greeted by the hosannas of the people and honored by royalty. Have not the rains descended like music on the parched fields? Have not the dews fallen in holy benediction? Springs leap out of the old rocks, and brooks swell and flow singing down the valleys. In happy prospect the children gather the lilies again and Sharon is all ablush with roses; Carmel's slopes are green with thrifty vines and the cattle on a thousand hills grow sleek and fat; gaunt famine has vanished and sweet prosperity goes laughing and dancing through the land. But Jezebel has sworn an oath. Maddened at the recital of the prophet's triumph on Carmel, enraged at the slaughter of the priests of Baal, this royal tigress sends hissing through her teeth a desperate vow, to kill Elijah. For once in his life the brave old prophet turned and fled. The famine could not frighten him; the storms of the mountains never made him quail; the king could not disconcert him; 450 wild, howling priests of Baal never made him tremble, but when Jezebel spoke her mind, "he arose, and went for his life." He left Jezreel at as quick a pace as he entered when he beat the chariot of Ahab; he was now straining every muscle to distance the chariot of Jezebel. He flees to the wilderness, and in the solitude beneath the juniper tree for once seems to lose his self-poise, his superb, all-mastering confidence. He had been an independent, fearless, self-sufficient man, standing against the fashionable tendency and drift of the times; but now, where he was strong he becomes weak and uncertain. The strain has been too much even for his rugged moral constitution and he is ready to give up and die. In his zeal and in the flush of success he imagined he was doing it all, that no one else was taking any important part in the reformation, and it was most discouraging. Again, even the strongest, most independent men who are aiming to advance the public weal like to be appreciated. But, if, after a faithful, heroic battling against evil and a successful work of good done for the people, one is not appreciated and hears no words of commendation and sympathy, but becomes the target of abuse and the victim of a revengeful fanaticism, he will be apt to lose his courage and his public-spirited ambition.

While Elijah, as a refugee, is seeking safety in the solitude of the wilderness, God still keeps him. While Jezebel is hunting him, angels are ministering unto him. Ordered to Horeb he finds a cave and lodges there. Strange place for so large a man! Trying to get away from Jezebel and the world; trying, also, to escape from conscience and from the Guardian Angel, from duty and from God, like the philosopher, Hobbes, he would, if it were possible, find a hole to crawl into out of the world. He is suffering the temptations of discouragement. What small places discouraged men do sometimes creep into! "What doest thou here, Elijah?" It is the voice of God or conscience. Your place is not in the cave, but on the mountain. And there he stands once more — on the heights. A tempest sweeps in fury down, the rocks are riven by the thunderbolt, but Elijah heeds it not. An earthquake follows the storm, and Horeb reels and staggers, but Elijah seems all unmindful of the awful and sublime spectacle. Then fire leaps out of the sky and flames up from the bowels of the mountain as though it were an *Ætna* or *Vesuvius*, but Elijah stands unmoved. After the thunders are hushed and the mountain has ceased to rock with earthquake convulsions, and the fires have subsided, there comes "a still small voice." The prophet starts from his reverie, hides his face in his mantle and hurries toward the cave. A voice, the "still small voice," arrests him, and he realizes he is with God in that awful solitude. He there bitterly complains of the corruption of the times and the universal apostasy, claims to be alone in the work of reform, and that he is living in constant peril of his life. Then he learns a great and wholesome lesson, for he is given the assurance that he is not the only living man who is in sympathy with the reform movement. The silent prayers of 7,000 in Israel were daily going up to God, and in the scenes which he had witnessed on Horeb the lesson was taught him that in those prayers there was more power than in all the fierce and awful demonstrations of Carmel, or in the outward pomp and ceremony of religious formalism, or even in the afflicting providences that had visited the land. Elijah was not alone. No other man came forth to champion the cause of God before the people; no other lifted his voice in stern denunciation and warning; no other called down fire from heaven; no other challenged the apostate nation to the test on Carmel; but many were still praying to God who did not bow the knee to Baal, and in those prayers there was a silent power of which the hot-souled, impetuous man of action was ignorant.

Elijah went from Horeb a braver, stronger soul than ever. He found in Elisha a sympathetic fellow-reformer and with him toiled, like Luther with Melancthon in a later age, for the suppression of vice and unbelief, the overthrow of superstition, and the enlightenment of his country. Undoubtedly the work of the reformers had created a reaction against idolatry and in favor of Jehovah-worship which resulted in new displays of God's favor and protecting providence. The successful resistance of the Syrian invasion led by Benhadad was a proof of God's favor, since Ahab's triumph had been prophesied. Ahab himself, however, proved a most cowardly, unpatriotic, and pusillanimous general and king in the whole affair. He offered to surrender at the first demand of Benhadad, but the more patriotic senators and people would not have it so. The attack on Samaria was repulsed, the Syrians fled before the young princes of Israel, and Benhadad, reeling from his tent too drunk to give a sensible command, struggled into his saddle and with drunken frenzy escaped for his life. In the second invasion at the return of the year, Benhadad was repulsed and 100,000 Syrian infantry were slain in a day. Ahab displayed very inferior military genius and demonstrated his lack of loyalty in the conditions of surrender which he accepted from Benhadad, and by the unholy alliance into which he entered with the Syrians. But the basest wickedness of Ahab and Jezebel manifested itself in the robbery and murder of a private citizen whose thrifty vineyard bordered on the royal domain in sight of the palace at Samaria. The murder of Banquo and of Duncan, king of Scotland, by the ambitious Macbeth, and the assassination of Henry VI. and Edward V., instigated by Richard III. of England, were royal in character as compared with the conspiracy



MOUNT HOREB.

DAVID ROBERTS.

which Jezebel instigated against Naboth, resulting in his death and the confiscation of his vineyard. Ahab had proposed that Naboth commit a crime against his own heirs and against the law of the land by trading him the vineyards which he had inherited, and which by the law of tribal inheritance could not be sold or given away. Unable to secure the vineyard by this illegal method proposed, the king was in great distress of mind until Jezebel took it upon herself to secure the coveted prize by a conspiracy which ended in the murder of Naboth.

So atrocious was this crime, committed against an humble citizen by royalty itself, that Elijah was once more roused to a fearful pitch of holy indignation and met the king with a scathing rebuke for his crime of murder and robbery, and prophesied to his face his violent death and the utter extinction of his royal house. Soon after this, Ahab sought the aid of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, in an ambitious design to capture Ramoth Gilead from the king of Syria. Even in this enterprise the mean and villainous character of Ahab manifested itself on the field of battle. Evidently he had premeditated the sacrifice of Jehoshaphat, equal to an out-and-out assassination. For, with a cunning worthy of him, he went into battle disguised, but suggested that Jehoshaphat array himself in royal uniform. By this plan he hoped the king of Judah would become the target of the enemy's arrows and be slain, while he would himself be protected by his disguise, and thus escape. As he had anticipated, the enemy's attack was directed against the person of Jehoshaphat by special command of the Syrian king, who mistook him for the king of Israel. Jehoshaphat saved himself by revealing his identity. But Ahab did not escape; there flew across the field a chance arrow from an unknown bow; it found the joint of Ahab's harness, and wounded him to the death. Although he lingered through the day and did not leave the field, he sank at evening in his blood-stained chariot. His army gave up the fight and bore their dead king to Samaria where, as they washed the royal chariot, the dogs licked up his blood as Elijah had prophesied they would.

Ahaziah's reign, following Ahab's, was of short duration. A fall from his upper chamber resulted in injuries from which he died two years after he ascended the throne. Elijah appears again in this reign to prophesy the death of the king, and when the king sends out a company of soldiers to bring the prophet in a prisoner, he again commands the very fires of heaven, which smite the soldiers as with the lightning of death. When at last he comes into the king's presence he rebukes him for sending to a prophet of Baal instead of to the prophet of the Lord to learn the issue of the injuries he had received from his fall. Again he predicts the king's death, which prediction is soon fulfilled and Jehoram succeeds to the throne of Israel.

CHAPTER V.

ELISHA.

ANOTHER prophet is now about to inherit the mantle of Elijah — Elisha, the husbandman. The first time we see him he is plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in a locality of the valley of the Jordan called "The meadow of the dance." As he plods along after the lolling cattle, with no ambition beyond that of being a thrifty farmer, with no dreams but of harvests and plenty, a strange man comes striding toward him across the field; a dark, hairy, stern-browed man, who, without a word throws his mantle upon the plowman and strides on and out of sight. In this eccentric fashion Elijah has called Elisha to become his successor in the line of the prophets. No more plowing for this farmer of the Jordan valley. He makes a feast of two of his oxen, burns his plow, and gives himself up to a preparation for his great mission. No man ever with firmer resolution shut off his own retreat from duty by burning the bridges or the ships behind him than did Elisha when he burnt his plow and roasted his oxen.

The divine wisdom often picks up a man for use just where human conceit would not be apt to look for him. Providence took a cattle raiser in Abraham and made him the sire of a mighty race. He took a slave in Joseph and made him a prime minister. He took a foundling in Moses and made him history's greatest law-giver. He took a shepherd in David and made him a poet and a king. He took a captive in Daniel and made him a liberator. He took a fisherman in John and made him the Revelator. He took a tentmaker in Paul and made him the apostle of Christianity to the Roman empire. He took the son of a swarthy miner in Luther and made him a reformer. He took a tinker in Bunyan and made him an inspired dreamer. He took a spinner in Livingstone and made him the light of Africa. He took a frontiersman and railsplitter in Lincoln and made him the Emancipator. He took a plowman in Elisha and made him a prophet. We hear nothing of him until seven or eight years later, at the close of Elijah's career, when we find him a constant companion of his grand old master. He seemed to be looking for an uncommon and triumphant close to Elijah's career and he acted as though the glorious end were not far off. Elijah is not to die of hunger in the wilderness, nor beneath the juniper tree of grief and disappointment, nor in the gloomy cave of the rocks, nor in dungeon and chains, nor by the fire or sword, nor even on the mountains, as did Moses in the olden time. Did his quick ear once catch the far-off sound of abundance of rain which no other ears could hear? And now, while walking on Jordan's banks with his loved disciple, and passing dry shod through the stream which parted its waters before the sweep of his mantle, does not the keen-eared old prophet catch the distant sound as of the opening of mighty gates, the trampling of swift hoofs, and the rumbling of golden wheels beyond where the thunders sleep and the glorious stars keep sentinel? Watch him! Look at him once again! Majestic man! How tall he looks, and grand, and kingly! No poet ever fancied or artist ever delineated so noble a form. Not Angelo's "Moses," not the Rhodian "Colossus," not Phidian "Jupiter," not Homeric "Agamemnon" wears half the dignity, and strength, and nobleness of this great prophet of the living God as he mounts the gleaming chariot of Israel and sweeps, a plumed victor, to the skies. Out of that sad, degenerate age rose the grandest character that adorns the history of God's prophets in the earth, showing that the grace of God may conquer circumstances and environment and make characters more just and noble than the times, and inspire lives which are in sublime contradiction of the false philosophy which may dominate society. During the reign of the Athenian tyrants the wise and virtuous Socrates

teaches his philosophy; in Nero's dark and bloody time Seneca gives forth his light in Rome; out of the political turmoil, ecclesiastical corruption, and religious degeneracy of the thirteenth century Dante rises in Italy; when Florence is given up to worldliness and social impurity a Savonarola appears to preach righteousness; in the cruel, oppressive, and superstitious days of Richard II. of England a Wycliffe becomes the morning star of reformation; during the reigns of Israel's wicked, idolatrous kings appears the prophet Elijah.

If it was ever proved true that "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown," it must have been during the unhappy and eventful reign of Jehoram, who succeeded his brother Ahaziah on the throne of Israel. Rebellions that were brewing even so early as Ahab's reign now broke forth in all their fury. This king inherited trouble. Invasion, rebellion, and famine combined to bring distress upon the rapidly declining kingdom. For reasons of state Jehoram refused to give in his personal adherence to the Baal-worship which had been so earnestly supported by Ahab and Jezebel, but he still adhered to the calf-worship instituted by Jeroboam. During this reign the Moabite rebellion, led on by Mesha, broke forth, and Jehoram, though aided as we have seen by the kings of Edom and of Judah, was not able to subdue it. The Syrians, moreover, kept up a series of predatory incursions into the land which culminated in a most determined siege of Samaria by Benhadad and his allied chiefs. This siege was attended by a famine which brought upon the people indescribable suffering, so that they were driven in their insanity to the most horrible and inhuman extremes to satisfy their hunger.

At that time as much as \$5 was demanded for a quart of beans and \$20 for the head of an ass, nor could food be had for love nor money. Women, in that frenzy of starvation, boiled and ate their own children. This famine was but one of the 350, or more, that have visited humanity in the course of history, but it was one of the most distressing. In studying the philosophy of these dreadful evils it has been found that they have resulted from such various causes as drought, frost, storms, earthquakes, destructive insects, ignorance of agricultural science, and war. In this instance war and drought combined to bring scarcity of food and the consequent miseries. Rarely have people been pushed to the extremity of eating human flesh, but this instance does not stand alone in the cruel history of famines. In England, since the beginning of the Christian era, the people have at times been driven to the necessity of eating the bark of trees, of making bread of fern roots, and even of eating the flesh of horses, dogs, cats, and vermin. Dufresnoy is authority for the statement that in the fifth century Italy was visited by such destitution that parents ate their children, as Josephus declares was also done in Jerusalem during the siege of Titus. As late as the eleventh century of the Christian era, Egypt suffered a seven years' famine, during which the people not only devoured dogs and cats, purchased at a high price, but even ate animals that died of diseases, and finally hesitated not at making food of human corpses. The calamity that befell Israel had its natural causes; it was of the Lord, but of the Lord because according to natural laws. The people's idolatries had enervated them. Sensuality had been introduced with the Baal and Venus worship which caused a rapid deterioration of the physical strength and moral vigor of the people. They could no longer marshal a large and victorious army of soldiers to resist invasion. Nor could they put a great industrial army into the field to develop the resources of the land. Their men were puny, effeminate, cowardly creatures, whose sensualisms had sapped their energies and quenched their spirit of honor, valor, and true manhood. Hence, the perpetual invasions of neighboring nations encouraged by their weakness, and hence in large manner the famine in spite of the drought was the result of industrial enervation, physical deterioration, and the generally demoralizing influence of base, unchaste idolatries.

The king, blinded by his own sensualism, could not understand the philosophy of Israel's misfortunes. To his shallow mind, Elisha, the prophet of Jehovah, was responsible for the famine. Just as the corrupt politicians of Florence blamed Savonarola for the calamities which

he only predicted, and as Ahab made Elijah responsible for the woes which he prophesied, so Jehoram accused Elisha of bringing the famine upon Samaria, and vowed he would have the prophet's head. While in this national decline "one woe doth tread upon another's heels," the people were witnessing displays of God's power by their devoted prophet which should have convinced them of the error and sin of idolatry and won them back to the old paths of faith and righteousness. One light shone brightly and steadily in the darkness and storm of those troublous times. Elisha was a worthy successor of Elijah in the line of the prophets. It had been Elisha's prayer, that double the spirit of Elijah might rest on him. When the grand and heroic old Tishbite ascended in triumph from Jordan's banks, his faithful disciple cried: "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." This was doubtless a common phrase, expressive of the power and influence of the great man of God, and was equivalent to saying: "The strength of Israel has departed." Elijah was to the nation its truest defense, its greatest power, its "chariot and horsemen."

It is not seldom that one man comes to be recognized as of more value to the nation than all the chariots and horsemen of war. Philip of Macedon was made to stand in greater fear of Demosthenes and his oratory than of all the armies and navies of the Athenians. The invading nations came to dread the power of God's prophets more than all the chariots and horsemen of Israel, for, when an Elijah or Elisha foretold the triumph of Israel's army, the enemy knew they were doomed, because the God of the prophets fought against them and for the children of Israel. When a veteran commander of the Greek navy was approached by his men with the discouraging intelligence: "The ships of the enemy number more than ours," he replied: "How many ships do you reckon me?" So might Elijah have said: "How many chariots and horsemen do you reckon me?" When an old soldier in Spain caught sight of Wellington as he passed by him for the first time after his return to the army, he cried out with enthusiasm: "Bless my eyes! I had rather see thee come back, than see 10,000 men come to help us." When Elisha saw his master vanish, he felt that the power and very salvation of Israel had departed, "the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." But no; God had not withdrawn himself, nor had he recalled the spirit of prophecy. The mantle of Elijah fell at Elisha's feet, the prophetic office remained and with it the spirit and power of the supernatural, for as Elisha caught up the sacred mantle and smote the waters of Jordan, lo! they parted as when Elijah himself wrapped the mantle together and smote them. The sons of the prophets, beholding the miracle, hailed Elisha as a true successor of Elijah, and as they shouted: "The spirit of Elijah doth rest upon Elisha," they bowed before him in acknowledgment of his divine endowment with the prophetic spirit, and in recognition of the fact that supernaturalism as a force in history was perpetual in its providential activity. In proof of his divine mission Elisha wrought miracles which, in number and importance, were not inferior to the works of his master. By the power of God in him the son of the Shunammite widow was raised to life, the poisonous pottage was rendered harmless and wholesome, the twenty barley loaves were multiplied to feed bountifully an hundred persons, the iron ax was made to float upon the water, Naaman, the Syrian general, was healed of his leprosy, and many other wonders were wrought. But doubtless Elisha himself was the greatest miracle of his age; a miracle of character, of righteousness, of faith. Nations do not see until the great life has been lived and has become a conspicuous part of the best history of the past that that life is the greatest thing in that history. The power of such a man is not understood; people generally are as blind to the supernatural or providential influences accompanying a righteous soul into history as was the servant of Elisha blind to the prophet's power when the Syrian host descended upon Dothan to seize and take him away captive. Alarmed at the multitude of horses and chariots that compassed the city, the fearful servant cried: "What shall we do?" when, in proof of the fact that "they that be with us are more than they that be with them," Elisha prayed God to

open the young man's eyes, and he saw "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha." If there had been need, doubtless there were times when God might have opened the people's eyes to see not horses and chariots of fire but ministering angels, seraphs of mercy, round about the prophet. While the king was hunting him, and the king's servant was commanded to behead him, the good prophet was praying for and prophesying better times. In answer to that prayer and in fulfillment of that prophecy the Syrians raised the siege, deserted their camp and in their precipitate haste left behind them sufficient provisions to relieve the city of its distress and famine.

Elisha proved himself a veritable king-maker, extending his prophetic jurisdiction over Syria as well as Israel, and in fulfillment of his word, Hazael, one of Benhadad's generals, succeeded him on the throne of Syria, though he assassinated the old king by smothering him in his bed. The courage and faithfulness of God's prophet were fully tested when the forebodings of the calamitous results of the fulfillment of his prophecy broke his patriotic heart and caused him to weep as he addressed the Syrian general. He foresaw that Hazael would become a powerful scourge to the children of Israel; a barbarous, heartless, and cruel invader; yet he could not shrink from his high duty of foretelling Benhadad's downfall and Hazael's ascendancy.

The fears of Elisha were soon realized, as Hazael proceeded with dispatch to invade the dominion of Israel. Jehoram was joined by Ahaziah, the king of Judah. They met the Syrian invader and engaged in battle at Ramoth Gilead, where the Syrians proved victorious and Jehoram was wounded. As the king of Israel, suffering from his wound, accompanied by the king of Judah, returned to Jezreel he little dreamed that disaster and death were there in store for him. While Jehoram was resting and recovering at Jezreel revolution was brewing in his army.

Elisha foretold the enthronement of Jehoram's general Jehu, as king over Israel, and he sent a son of the prophets with oil to anoint Jehu and reveal to him his royal destiny. The captain of the king's hosts was accordingly hailed as king by the army. He immediately proceeded to make good his claims to imperial power by leading his legions to Jezreel where Jehoram was visiting his mother, Jezebel, and Ahaziah, the king of Judah.

Jehu was a man of great dash and impetuosity, a sort of Marshal Ney, or Sheridan, who came on like the whirlwind or struck the enemy with the suddenness and force of the thunderbolt. The watchmen knew who was advancing on Jezreel, for he drove furiously like Jehu. After the king had sent messenger after messenger who had not returned, but had been consigned to the rear of the advancing army, he mounted his royal chariot and went forth in person to inquire the cause of the army's approach. When he learned Jehu's mission and discovered treason and revolution, expressing his fears to Ahaziah, he turned to retreat, but the general's arrow flew unerringly to his heart and as he sunk in his royal chariot Jehu's captain hurled the dead body to the ground, and lo! the place was in the vineyard of Naboth which Jehoram's father and mother, Ahab and Jezebel, had appropriated by robbery and murder. Ahaziah was also overtaken in his flight and slain, and his body was borne in his chariot back to Jerusalem for burial.

Jehu had overthrown two kings and captured a throne. As the soldier-king advanced triumphantly into Jezreel, the wretched Jezebel, painted and bejeweled beyond all modesty, greeted him tauntingly from her window, but ere the words of insult were out of her mouth she was hurled to the pavement below to be trampled on by the war horses of Jehu and to be torn to pieces by the dogs of the city. Elijah had foreseen this awful fate of the idolatrous Zidonian wife of Ahab who had brought such corruption, disaster, and misery to the nation. The prophet had foretold, some fifteen years before, that the very dogs should eat her by the walls of Jezreel. Jehu exterminated the family of Ahab. Wholesale slaughter followed his victory. He was

a man of blood ; a ferocious soldier who seemed to think he was doing God service in destroying all the workers of iniquity. He was an iconoclast and began to uproot and destroy the detestable Baal-worship which had been so universally substituted for the worship of Jehovah. By a cunning and deceitful piece of strategy, he destroyed the worshipers of Baal in Samaria. The multitude had, by royal edict, been called to the place of idolatrous worship. They came unsuspectingly to join in the service which, they were given to understand, was not only sanctioned but commanded by the king. When the place of assembly was crowded with the devotees of Baal, a general massacre was ordered. The soldiers rushed in and hewed down the people with the sword. The image of Baal was shattered, and the very building was torn down



THE KING AND THE PROPHET.

and rebuilt as a draught house. Jehu, however, did not return to the pure worship of Jehovah, but still tolerated and sanctioned as the national religion the calf-worship, or the cult of Apis, introduced by the first king of Israel, Jeroboam.

It was during the reign of Jehu that the signs of the times indicated the beginning of the end of Israel's national power and history. "In those days the Lord began to cut Israel short." Idolatry had almost run its course ; it had well-nigh sapped the nation of its virtue and its life. The arms of Israel grew weaker every hour ; the strength of the invading nations became more and more irresistible. Hazael began to be felt in all the coasts of Israel, but Jehu seems to have lost his dash and vigor and made no determined or successful resistance as the insolent and inhuman Syrian smote them from the Jordan eastward. This Syrian devastation continued

through the reign of Jehoahaz until the army of Israel was reduced to fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and 10,000 footmen. What a decline of military power from the days when Jeroboam was able to put into the field 800,000, or at lowest estimate 80,000, mighty men of valor! What a comment on the degenerating influence of a sensual idolatry! Nations that had stood in awe of Israel a century before now held her in contempt. She seemed for one spasmodic season of revival in the reign of Jehoash to reassert her pristine independence and military spirit. Three successive times, in fulfillment of Elisha's prophecy, Jehoash met and defeated the Syrian invaders and regained lost territory. When Amaziah, king of Judah, insolently challenged him to war, he met him face to face at Beth-shemesh, defeated him, took him captive, marched upon Jerusalem, broke down the walls, and despoiled the temple and the royal palace of their treasures of silver and gold. For the first time in the history of this national division had Israel been able to overcome Judah so completely; for the first time did Israel's arms assail and destroy the walls of the holy city; for the first time did the descendants of Jacob lay profane hands on the temple and rob it of that precious furniture which symbolized the faith of a high and righteous ancestry. No reacquisition of territory, no spoils of sacred temple and royal palace, however, could compensate Israel for one great loss which she suffered in the reign of Jehoash. Elisha the prophet, who had been the light of Israel for many years, who had been divine truth, wisdom and power to five eventful reigns, passed away. The king bowed weeping at his bedside and cried, as Elisha himself had cried when Elijah ascended: "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." Royalty acknowledged that the strength of Israel was not in her arms or in her revenues, but rather in the prophet of the living God. It was in those last moments that Elisha promised deliverance from the power of the invading Syrians. He commanded the king to bring bow and arrows and open the window of the sick chamber toward the east. Then as the king placed the shaft to the string, held the bow with a strong, firm hand and drew the arrow to the head, the thin, trembling hands of the dying prophet rested on the hands of the king and Elisha huskily cried: "Shoot!" Away sped the arrow. It meant that Jehoash should free the land from Syria. The king grasped the remaining arrows at the bidding of the prophet and struck the ground three times in token of the three several victories which he should gain over the nation's enemy. Elisha was disappointed; the king should have continued to strike until there had been given the promise of the utter destruction of Syria.

But Elisha's work, and Jehoash's as well, passed on to others. The prophet, however, in his death, was still the embodiment of supernatural energy. The dead coming in contact with his lifeless body were reanimated and the miracle of resurrection occurred in his very tomb. Did it not mean that the power of the good man survived him? In the memory of him perpetuated, is there not the inspirational power of new life? Others shall touch that life if only in thought, if only by study and contemplation of its virtues, and be raised thereby out of nothingness, out of oblivion and death, into a virtuous self-assertion, into positive being, into great purpose and high aim, into immortal activity. At the tombs of the great and good the generations of progressive humanity catch the spirit and power of fresh life. Ambition of the high and holy sort is kindled anew when men walk among the tombs of poets, heroes, philanthropists, and statesmen, who sleep in stately Westminster of England, in Santa Croce of Florence, in the Pantheon of France. And when the nation's children lay the flowers on the graves of our soldier dead there seems to come from this laureled and sanctified dust the power of a new patriotism, the awakening inspiration of an immortal heroism, an energy that creates within the spirit of self-sacrifice and brotherhood.

Oh, that a dying nation might have touched that prophet's tomb and caught therefrom the power of a new life! As Robert Hall said: "I buried my materialism in the grave of my father;" how grand it would have been if Israel could have said: "We buried our idolatry in

the tomb of our prophet!" They might have been able to say, if they would: "From that tomb, from the last touch of the good and mighty man, from thinking on him as he slept and on the life he lived, the power he had, the truths he taught, and the light his spirit shed abroad, we have come endowed with a new purpose, a new faith, a new life."

There was power in Elisha's bones to raise the dead, but it had been proved that, with all his divine illumination, his prophetic spirit, his gift of miracles, his divine wisdom, he had not the power morally to revive a nation dying of idolatry and sensuality. Israel had two great prophets during the history of her separate national existence. These prophets — Elijah and Elisha — were endowed with the twofold gift of prophecy and miracles. They were not men of letters, but of action. They left the world no contribution to literature; their names belong wholly to the history of events. They had no history to write, but much to make. They were oral teachers of the truth which inspired them, and in this respect differed somewhat, if not quite significantly, from such prophets as Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah, whose names hereafter belong to the literature of God's people as well as to their history.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROPHETISM.

THE progressive evolution of prophetism may be traced through a thousand years or more of sacred history. The functions of the prophetic office become more and more numerous and diversified, while the power of the prophet grows in historical significance with the unfoldings of Hebrew nationalism and the culminating development of the Messianic idea.

The prophet, in all this providential history, has been a medium of divine communication. Through him has poured the stream of moral light by which the divine wisdom has revealed to the world the paths of righteousness and truth.

In the far-off time of the Abrahamic beginnings of sacred history, God, in a dream to Abimelech, designated Abraham, a prophet. The prophetic function was then apparently limited to the gift of intercessory prayer. When Aaron was appointed as Moses' prophet doubtless it was intended that he should be no more than a counselor of his chief, or, possibly, his spokesman, since Moses had originally no such gift in public, diplomatic, or forensic speech as Aaron. When the children of Israel were in the Wilderness and were murmuring against the manna, which had become a very monotonous if not almost nauseating diet, Moses sought God for aid to bear the burden of responsibility which was crushing him down. It was then that Moses, in obedience to God's commands, called together seventy of the elders and officers of the people, and they received an endowment of the same spirit which rested upon Moses, therewith to share with him the burden of official responsibility. When the spirit came upon them they began to prophesy. This may signify, simply, that they began to speak and to teach the people by explaining the ways of God, exhorting to faithfulness, and encouraging them with promises of coming good. This spirit fell upon the elders and officers as they were assembled at the tabernacle. Others received the same endowment; although they did not observe the formality of meeting with the elders they were evidently fit men to be intrusted with the power of exhortation and the spirit of prophecy. Eldad and Medad gathered a company of the discouraged and complaining people about them in the camp and broke forth in prophecy or exhortation, haranguing them in cheerful, hopeful terms and helping them to look toward the brighter future. A complaint was lodged against these two sanguine stump-speakers of the camp, these

optimistic prophets of better things, which brought from Moses the exclamation: "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets." Would that they all were looking on the bright side of things, talking hopefully and teaching the true doctrines of providence! Here, for the first time, appears the idea of special spiritual endowment for the exercise of the prophetic function. The spirit that rested on Moses was imparted to the elders, and without any ceremony or ecclesiastical formality it came upon Eldad and Medad. The possibility of all the Lord's people becoming prophets in that limited sense may be implied from the exclamation of Moses; the fitness for that work was but the endowment of the Spirit: "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them." The gift of miracles, of visions, of dreams, or of foretelling future events need not have accompanied, save in exceptional cases, the spirit of prophecy. Evidently the gift of visions was early bestowed upon certain prophets who were at first called Seers. When God appeared to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam in the tabernacle at Hazeroth, he said: "If there be a prophet among you, I, the Lord, will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream." This seeing of visions and dreaming of dreams seems to be a new function of the prophetic office. God's communication with Moses was not by dream or vision, but face to face. That privilege was granted to Moses only. From his time on, the prophet who became the agent of a divine communication to the people must have received the communication by the vision or dream, or by such an endowment of the spirit as came upon the seventy elders. When the time was ripe for this kind of communications, and the prophetic office assumed an essential importance in the development both of the monotheistic and Messianic idea, God promised his chosen race a prophet from the ranks of the common people. The people had requested that God reveal himself no more by fire nor by strange and supernatural voice. In answer to this request, which was inspired by their awe and fear, God promised to raise them up a seer from their midst into whose mouth he would put his words. Thus the prophet came to be more than a gifted teacher or preacher; he came to be the inspired medium of the communication of God's thought to man. He began to speak as he was moved by the Spirit, and he spake the word which God, by inspiration, put into his mouth. He was the oracle of God. The power to foretell events becomes now a gift inseparable from the prophetic office. One of the tests of the true prophet—a negative test it is true—was to be recognized in this, that "when a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously."

So important was this office that the people were held responsible for their treatment of the divine communications which proceeded from the prophet's lips. "Whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." Moreover, death was the penalty for the presumption of speaking a word in God's name which God had not commanded to be spoken. The person whom God called to this high and holy ministry was more than a gifted philosopher, lawmaker, teacher, or poet; more than a Plato, an Aristides, a Lycurgus, a Homer. The poetical afflatus did not constitute him a prophet; philosophical acumen did not make him a seer; learning, logic, and eloquence did not authorize him to speak in the name of God. The gift of the Spirit, and the gift of the divine word to speak to men, were essential to prophetic authority and power.

As Hebrew theocracy developed toward institutional government and a definite monarchical nationalism, this office became a more clearly defined institution and shaped itself to become an essential part of the new nationalism. Samuel was the last prophet of the Jewish theocracy and the first of the Jewish monarchy. He both witnessed and largely helped to effect the religio-political transition from a government of judges to a government of kings. With Samuel the sacred office took on a new importance, and the prophet became a most potent political and historical factor. A school of the prophets was established, where men

were educated for the high and influential functions of national teachers. What the university or theological seminary is to the Gospel ministry of to-day that school was to the ministry of the old dispensation of law and symbolism. The sons of the prophets or the students of those schools prepared themselves to perform whatever duties of the prophetic office God called them to. They became the preachers and teachers of the nation. They explained the law and were recognized as the exponents of the theocratic principles of their religio-political constitution. To them the people looked for instruction in ethics and righteousness. All of them were not necessarily endowed with the gift of miracles or of visions, or with the power to foretell future events, nor were they all so filled with the Spirit as to become the inspired *medii* of verbal communications from God. Many of them were like the preachers of to-day, only learned, righteous, thoroughly consecrated men, who spoke the truth as they understood it, explained the law as they had the genius to do, and exhorted the people to right living with all the native earnestness of good and holy men, but without any special divine illumination or inspiration which made them the infallible oracles of God. From among them, however, God called certain men to exercise such power as working miracles, seeing visions, dreaming dreams, conveying definite, inspired verbal messages to the people and the nation, and foretelling future events.

This latter class became conspicuous in the eventful history of Jewish nationalism. From their ranks rose the men who wielded greater power than kings in national politics, and mightier influence than generals on the field of battle. From these chosen few came the poets, musicians, historians, and ethical writers who created the national literature and directed its taste and culture. The history of the prophets, therefore, cannot be less interesting and instructive than the record of the kings and military heroes of the Jewish people. Had not Homer as much to do with the upbuilding of Grecian civilization as Themistocles, or Demosthenes as Miltiades? Were not Phidias, the artist, and Plato the philosopher, as liberal contributors to Athenian greatness as Pericles? The greater history of Germany cannot be written, with all her emperors and generals, if we leave out of the record the names and work of Luther, Goethe, Kant, and Beethoven. The glory of France comes from the Calvins, Pascals, Fenelons, and Victor Hugos, no less than from her Turennes, Colignys, Mirabeaus, and Napoleons. Then, with all the pride which England takes in Alfred the Great, Elizabeth, and Victoria; in Nelson, Wellington, Marlborough, and Cromwell, how little, after all, would be her boast if she could not inscribe on her resplendent scroll of fame the names of Wycliffe and Chaucer, Bacon and Hooker, Shakspeare and Milton, Wesley and Tennyson. Short as the history of the American Republic is, we are glad to put beside the names of Washington, Lincoln, and Grant the equally glorious names of Mather and Roger Williams, Asbury and Channing, Whittier, Longfellow, Bryant, and Lowell.

The prophets of that olden time stood for the intellectualism of their age and country. They dreamed the nation's dreams, and sang the nation's songs. From them came the inspiration of learning, taste, and art. To them is due the credit for the nation's immortality in written and perpetuated history. It was Samuel's high distinction to anoint Saul as king of Israel and, after him, great David. But higher still was his honor when he established those schools of the prophets from which the true light of learning and culture was to shine, blending with the beauty of poetry, the charm of music, the fascinations of art, and the grandeur of history, all the glory of inspired promise, heavenly revelations, and divine righteousness. Whence came the first suggestion of a temple—a temple worthy at once of the purest artistic taste of the age, the noble monotheistic conceptions of the race, and the Messianic significance of Jewish symbolism, Jewish prophecy, and Jewish history? That first conception was born in the brain of Nathan. All the plans of David and all the achievements of Solomon which resulted in crowning the sacred mount with the temple of cedar and gold, the highest

triumph of Hebrew taste and art, if not of Hebrew devotion and hope, were but the blossom and fruit of the seed-thought first planted in the mind of Nathan the prophet by a divine inspiration. Where will you look for the center of the nation's musical culture and find the first endeavorings of that sublime genius which was to fill the temple with lofty strains on the day of its memorable dedication? In the school of the prophets. If Samuel was not the founder of the first musical college, he was doubtless the first to introduce the study of music into the curriculum of the school of the prophets. By Samuel's direction, Saul, the king, once found himself among the prophets, and as he met them, a great company coming down from the hill of God, their exercises of worship, prayers, and praises were accompanied by the music of psaltery and tabret, pipe and harp which they carried before them. Thus the sons of the prophets recognized music to be one of the accomplishments of, and, possibly, made the mastery of some instrument a part of, their preparation for their ministry.

The more highly developed functions of prophetism—which created the great mass of the national literature, foretold distant events of that history which was yet to be, and set forth the signs of the fulfillments of Messianic hope and promise—appear almost at the lowest pitch of national decline. In the darkest political days of all this Jewish history shine forth the brightest predictions of the Christ to be. Out of the most hopeless and distressing times comes the finest and most characteristic literature of the Hebrew genius. With the worst kings are found the noblest seers. In the blackest sky of national misfortune and degeneracy shine the brightest stars of prophetic song and eloquence. Many of the prophets following Samuel, and who were remarkable for their deeds, made no contribution to the national literature, no contribution to the Inspired Scripture which was to be the Word of God to all nations and to all ages. Nathan, Gad, Ahijah, Jehu, Elijah, and Elisha were intimately related to the kings and by their influence helped to fashion the character of their times. Thus we associate as history-makers, Nathan with David, Ahijah with Jeroboam, Shemaiah with Rehoboam, Azariah with Asa, Jehu with Baasha and Jehoshaphat, Elijah with Ahab, and Elisha with Jehoram and Jehoash. None of these prophets were authors of writings which have come down to us. They were all men of action, men of special oral power, who concerned themselves with passing events, but some of them wrote no living word for future times, nor seemed endowed with the power of foretelling far distant events. They prophesied the outcome of a battle or of a king's illness, or of an international conflict, but saw not the far-off thing which must come to pass, and had no gift of Messianic prophecy.

But now we come, in the evolution of prophetism, to what may be called the literary prophets—the creators of the Hebrew prophetic literature. The works of sixteen such writers have been preserved. These have been divided according to their importance into greater and lesser prophets, as the painters of early art history have been divided into the ranks of the great masters and the little masters.

The greater prophets are Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and, possibly, Daniel. From the standpoint of literature, these must rank first as having left the nation and the world the most extensive and important writings. Undoubtedly much of the old Hebrew literature has been lost, and from reference to books no longer known to exist the Scriptures indicate that Nathan, Gad, and Jehu were literary prophets. But such productions as “The Book of Nathan, the prophet,” “The Book of Gad, the seer,” and “The Book of Jehu” have disappeared. It is possible, however, that the future will bring to human knowledge these lost books, or fragments of them, or more extensive quotations from them than are preserved in the present Scriptures. The archæological research which is rescuing from oblivion the literal correspondence of the kings of those ancient times may at some most fortunate moment find on tile or stone, long buried, the song of some forgotten poet or the lost prophecy of one of the inspired seers.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MINOR PROPHETS.

JOEL, in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, was doubtless the first of those poet-prophets who have contributed to the literature of the Jews the highly colored word-pictures which will ever be recognized, not only as the most reliable history of their troublous times, but also as the true philosophy of that history. Plato reasons well when he holds that poetry comes nearer the living truth than history. When Joel, with a marvelous flow of impassioned metaphor, simile, and allegory, describes the religio-political condition of affairs, it is as though some masterful artist like Vernet were painting the history of his own age for the Luxembourg of the national literature. Whether the prophecy of the coming of the palmerworm, the locust, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar is to be literally or figuratively interpreted remains a difficult question. Whether the coming of these pestiferous insects represented the invasions led on by Tiglath-Pileser, Shalmaneser, Sennacherib, and Nebuchadnezzar, or stood for the four great political powers, Assyrian, Medo-Persian, Macedonian, and Roman, or were actual and historical attacks of these various species of the locust, may not be so important as the doctrine taught by the prophet that these attacks, and the consequent famine and suffering, were the natural and logical result of turning from Jehovah-worship to idolatry. While the prophet cries: "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain," and with divine eloquence warns the nation of its imminent dangers and calamities, he sees far down the coming years the light which fills his poetical soul with rapture, and ere his short but intense and powerful strain is ended he foretells the happy time when God shall pour out of his spirit upon all flesh; a time of deliverance and salvation; a time which Peter, 700 years later, believes has dawned when the Spirit comes with power upon the disciples of Jesus Christ on the memorable day of Pentecost. One fact is evident in these orations, or poems, of the literary prophets: in their Messianic hope they all seem inspired, ages before Tennyson caught the magnificent thought, to foretell

"That one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."

Joel may be accepted as the type of the literary prophet, although it will be found that while he makes more or less of an impression upon his contemporaries and successors, nevertheless Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, and Habakkuk, as well as the greater prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, have marked characteristics of their own, individuality of style and temper, thought and aim, which preclude the supposition that they were copyists of Joel. With their diversities of style, they all had in common this high, uncompromising spirit of patriotism and righteousness, and hesitated not, in the name of Jehovah, to denounce idolatry and its attendant corruptions and crimes. They feared not the face of man, but boldly, before the people and before princes and kings, rebuked all forms of unrighteousness and predicted the inevitable punishments which God was preparing for the nations.

Amos was a simple herdsman of Tekoa, down in the country south of Jerusalem, and gave some attention to raising fruit. He was, in his own language, neither "a prophet nor the son of a prophet" — that is to say, he was not trained in the schools for that profession or calling. God called him as he followed the flock similarly as he called Elisha at the plow. It is significant that when corruption smites a nation the little virtue that at any time remains is generally found in the humbler ranks of society, with those who drive the plow, swing the ax,

beat the anvil, and herd the kine. Why this is true, why corruption seizes first upon the upper classes, so-called, it may not be difficult to discern. The process seems to be this: Power acquires wealth; wealth emancipates from toil and sanctions ease; ease demands amusement to prevent ennui, and luxury to satiate desire; luxury develops effeminacy and sensuality. History is full of lessons, one of the most important of which is this, that the only security of society, and of the Church itself, is the preservation of a religious virtue and a virtuous religion that will inspire a ceaseless mental, industrial, and spiritual activity and prevent the people from falling into that ignoble ease which smites everything with decay and death. Though Amos, down there with his sheep and fig trees, living a simple, temperate, industrious, and devout life, knew little of it, the age was one of refined corruption and corrupt refinement. There had come in the reign of Jeroboam II. a revival of prosperity and culture. It was an age of wealth, wine, and ivory couches; of music, pleasure, and idolatrous ceremony.

The rustic Amos received the call from God to go prophesy to this people — Israel. It took some time to find just the right man for the important work of the hour. He did not appear among the priests of Bethel; he was not to be found in the palaces of Jerusalem; he had not entered the school of the prophets; none of the clubs or social circles seemed to know him. But God's eye fell upon a bronze-cheeked, rough-handed, home-spun man away down in the Tekoa country, where a farmer had to put two shekels' worth of work on every shekel's worth of wool or of figs he raised. This uncultured son of toil, who had slept on the mountains, fed on the wild fruits, and heard the lions and the thunders, was sent to preach to a people who were reclining on ivory couches, dancing and singing to the music of the viols, drinking themselves drunk with wine foaming in golden bowls, feasting and gluttonizing, and worshiping—a *calf*. When this farmer-prophet opened his lips he proved to be a veritable Boanerges, and cried: "The Lord will thunder from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither," and on the prophet goes, peal after peal, flash after flash of what has been called a thunderstorm of prophecy. It was indeed a thunderstorm. It began with a roll of thunder; it closed in sunshine falling upon the rain-covered grass, and fruits, and flowers. When this thunderstorm was at its height there came this peal: "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion." And as the heavens are lurid with the lightnings of prophetic woe, even Amaziah, the high priest, is so terrified that he would have Amos banished the kingdom as an enemy of the commonweal and a conspirator against the king. But the climax of the prophecy has been reached. Soon the light breaks through, the clouds drift away, and all the land lies like a garden after rain, for the promise of blessing shall fall upon the righteous remnant.

Amos was the Robert Burns of the prophets — sanctified and inspired. He hated pride, cant, hypocrisy, and oppression, and was the singing champion of the wronged and suffering, the rustic lover of all honest men, as inveterate a foe of the golden calf as the Scottish plowman of the formal Kirk.

Hosea was a contemporary of Joel and Amos, a native of the northern kingdom, but later a resident in Judah, where he wrote his book — one of the most perfect and artistic productions of Hebrew literature. For some reason, which is not clearly apparent, the kingdom of Israel from the time of the partition produced greater prophets than Judah; the power of prophetism was there more conspicuous from the beginning. No prophets had risen in Judah with such power to determine events and shape history as Elijah and Elisha possessed in Israel. Hosea's book, with all its artistic completeness, is but a cry of despair. Nothing appears of a higher poetical order in all that literature. Sad, elegiac, burdened with a true poet's and a true patriot's lament, it holds the mirror up to nature and bears the very form and pressure of the time. With a truly oriental imagination Hosea enriches his prophetic strain with the most delicate and exquisite, and, again, with the boldest and most sublime imagery to be found in any

literature. With incomparable outbursts, not only of splendidly figurative rhetoric, but also of sincere, heart-burning eloquence, he sets over against the idolatry and moral degeneracy of the age the infinite love of God. He foresees with a prophet's eye the inevitable overthrow of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, but recognizes, as a profound student of the philosophy of history, that idolatry is working this national ruin. Little heed is given to these outbursts of impassioned poetical feeling and inspired prophecy. Degenerate as the times may be, however, the prophets and poets are true — Dante, lifting his voice against the darkness and against the sins of Church and State which bring the darkness to Italy and Europe; Milton, pouring forth his sturdy, puritanical song upon the frivolous ears of the weakest generation of English history; Whittier, singing the song of freedom and labor when a nation is consenting to law-protected slavery and hesitating to make the Declaration of Independence mean what it declares; Hosea, true though all the age is false and all horizons black. Like a bright and golden thread woven through the coarse and somber fabric is this pure line of inspired prophetism running through from the beginning to the end of this dark and tragic history of Hebrew nationalism. But hope triumphs, in the end, over sadness and regret, and on the clouds from which fierce lightnings have leaped at last rests the rainbow of promise. The prophecy of captivities is followed by prophecies of return; the land made desolate shall rejoice with the lilies and the corn, the olive and fir of a new spiritual life and prosperity.

Micah prophesied concerning Samaria and Jerusalem during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. He was doubtless a disciple and pupil of Isaiah. There is hardly less dignity and elevation of literary style in the writings of the pupil than in those of the master, and the Messianic character of his theme is not less definite and prominent. With the Assyrians lifting their strong arms to deal a crushing blow to Samaria, and with the more distant fate of Jerusalem clearly manifest to his prophetic vision, he raises his voice to a nobly hopeful theme, and sings of the blessed time when "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." This prophecy's fulfillment belongs to our century of Gospel enlightenment, of international laws and treaties, of reciprocity and arbitration. But what a bold, audacious prophecy for such a time as that, in which Micah, Hezekiah, and Sennacherib lived! It is recorded that, when Charles Sumner delivered his oration on "The True Grandeur of Nations," in Boston, July 4th, 1845, and made a magnificent argument against war and in favor of universal peace, Jeremiah Mason said he should as soon think of getting up a society against thunder and lightning as against war. But Micah, the Charles Sumner of the ancient Jews, prophesied the day of universal peace, even when all the horizon was black with the dust of marching warriors, and all the earth was trembling with the shock of contending arms. In that old prophecy the angels found the keynote of the Gloria in Excelsis of the advent morn, and from the inspired Micah learned to sing: "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men."

This prophecy of universal peace was made possible by still another, which has had an import as significant and influential as any to be found in the literature of prophetism. Taking his eye from Samaria and its fall, from Jerusalem and its approaching doom, he fixes it, glowing with prophetic fire, on little Bethlehem, and behold! it assumes a glory which never belonged to the proud capitals of Judah and Israel: "Thou Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Seven hundred years after these words were written they became luminous, burning words to the eyes of the Magi, who, journeying from the East to Jerusalem, and thence to little Bethlehem, guided by the star that rained its white splendor on the cradle of Jesus Christ, there presented gifts of gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, in celebration of the fulfillment of Micah's prophecy, the advent of the long expected "Ruler in Israel," of him that is "born King of the Jews." If not as

original in style as Joel or Hosea, it will not be questioned that Micah equaled these prophetic writers in greatness of theme and the Messianic spirit dominating his work.

The "burden of Nineveh" which was imposed on the prophetic spirit of Nahum does not contain the internal evidence of the date of the prophecy, or of the dwelling place of the prophet. He is called the Elkoshite. There are two graves honored as the resting place of Nahum; one in Galilee north of Tiberius, and the other in ancient Assyria, now Kurdistan. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the prophet was a descendant of captives led away by Tiglath-Pileser. It certainly gives vividness to his writings for us to imagine Nahum as living at Nineveh, or in its vicinity, and as describing the city and portraying the character of its affairs preceding its downfall, from the standpoint of an eyewitness. He knew the "Bloody City" to be "full of lies and robbery." He heard "the noise of a whip, and the noise of the rattling of the wheels, and of the prancing horses, and of the jumping chariots." Foreseeing the desolation to be wrought by the ascendancy of the Chaldean power and the decadence and overthrow of Assyrian empire, the prophet has a mighty faith in Jehovah which stays his heart, and comforts his own captive people, even yonder in the land of bondage: "The Lord is good; a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him." Perhaps no prophecy has been more accurately and undeniably fulfilled than Nahum's prediction of the downfall and obliteration of Nineveh: "Nineveh is laid waste: who will bemoan her?"

A single perusal of the short book of Habakkuk makes so profound an impression on the reader's mind that he cannot but wish that the story told of Benjamin Franklin relating to it were authenticated. It is said that Franklin pretended to a company of infidels, one day in Paris, that he had found quite a remarkable old book, which, to his thought, was incomparable in its literary style. He read the book, and the savants were lavish in their praises of its force, spirit, and eloquence, and demanded the name of its author. Franklin, to their chagrin, told them it was written by the prophet Habakkuk, and was a portion of the Bible, which they had been denouncing. Zephaniah, who prophesied in the days of the good Josiah in Judah, had foretold the Chaldean and Scythian invasions, and the havoc to be wrought by their conquering arms. Habakkuk wrote, after the dreaded hosts of the conquerors had poured down upon the devoted land, and had commenced their devastating work. Zephaniah's vision was greeted with a dark, hopeless picture of coming desolation. He predicted judgments and punishments. These were not intended for the Jews only, but also for the Philistines, the Ethiopians, and the Assyrians. In the midst of universal upheavals, revolutions, and national destructions, one people shall be preserved—"the remnant of Israel." The prophet, looking down the centuries to wonderful spiritual manifestations, to the fullness of time, to God's great day, breaks forth: "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more." Habakkuk sees what is taking place in the ravages of victorious invaders. He realizes that the spiritual decline of God's people is the cause of all their distresses and afflictions; hence his prayer, "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." Then, seeing the desolation as the result of the visitation of divine judgments, the prophet rises to one of the most sublime heights of faith in God to be found in Hebrew literature: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation!" What can be more impressive than the mighty faith and stern righteousness, the abiding hope and integrity of those prophets of Jehovah who, in the midst of universal moral and political chaos, sang of the peace and of the Christ to be!

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAJOR PROPHETS.

PROPHETISM reached the climax of its literary perfection in the work of Isaiah, whose ministry of nearly half a century extended from Uzziah to Hezekiah and included the reigns of Jotham and Ahaz. Unlike Amos, the rustic of Tekoa, Isaiah could boast aristocratic, if not royal, blood. The vision of God's glory which was granted him opened his prophetic eyes, by contrast, to the sinfulness of the people, and when the angel flew from heaven and touched his lips with a burning coal from the altar he was ready to respond to God's call for prophets, and cried: "Here am I; send me." There was a consecration to God, to truth, to country, and to martyrdom which redeemed that age and nation in some measure from utter disgrace and contempt. How truly one pure, heroic soul may save the reputation of a race! With this divine touch of fire and of power which sent Isaiah forth a messenger of inspiration, was associated, by consecration, the noblest natural gifts and highest scholastic attainments to be found combined in any one character of that age. Isaiah was the prince of prophets. His golden pen bore sceptered sway over the whole varied world of literary style and prophetic theme. This monarch in the realm of inspiration, from his throne of intellectual and spiritual authority, looked out upon the doings of kings and subjects, upon great national transitions, world movements, political convulsions, moral and religious transformations, historic evolutions, the march of eventful centuries, and the sway of those mighty forces which providence has set in operation for the solution of the problems of human destiny.

The style of this prophet is rich and varied. If Hosea is the Raphael, and Ezekiel the Leonardo, Isaiah is the Michael Angelo of artistic literary prophetism. His book is the Sistine Chapel of Hebrew literature. Or, if Jeremiah is the Dante and Amos the Robert Burns, Isaiah is the "myriad-minded" Shakspeare of the prophets. What instruments of poetical expression was he not master of? From shepherd's reed, and minstrel's harp, and temple organ he sounded all the notes of simplest and sublimest music. With the subtlety of the dialectician, the profundity of the philosopher, and the serene contemplativeness of the mystic, he combined in his work the eloquence of the orator, the imagination of the poet, and the divine illumination of the seer. The biographer of kings—for he wrote the life of Hezekiah and also of Uzziah—the historian of empires, the prophet whose happy vision had been blessed with the manifestations of God's glory, the patriot-saint whose loyalty, courage, and exalted purity were a rebuke to the wickedness of high places and the unrighteousness of the age, Isaiah stands out conspicuously as the noblest individual combination of moral and intellectual manhood in the history of literary prophetism.

Though at times this great soul seems to take a most pessimistic view of national affairs and of general historical outcomings, and though vividly to impress the people with the certainty and sadness of approaching disasters he assumes the garb of an ascetic and hermit, going about barefoot and clad in sackcloth, yet in the darkest day he sees the far-distant light, and sings of better times. Here the Messianic idea blazes forth in its full-orbed splendor, and Isaiah becomes the evangelical prophet. So clearly and unambiguously did he set forth the character, works, and mission of the Messiah that Philip, centuries later, when seated in the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch who was reading the book, was enabled from its teachings to preach unto him Jesus. Jesus read this book and declared himself to be its fulfillment. With all the discouragements of the time in which he prophesied and with his gloomy forebodings

of impending disaster, Isaiah still saw the purpose of God making for righteousness and a world's salvation through the agency of the remnant of the chosen race. So, while he prophesied captivities he also, in harmony with his co-prophets, foretold the return of the Jews to Zion.

Isaiah is not a mere literary recluse, a study prophet, a library seer. He is a man of activity. He moves among men. He is in touch with every phase of this national life. He knows what is going on as well as what is coming on. His keen, intelligent eye is on national and international affairs. He foretells Sennacherib's defeat, rebukes Hezekiah's indiscretions, but also prays for his life. He is no celibate; he rears a family; greets his wife as a prophetess, and looks upon his sons not only with a father's affection, but also with a patriot's hope and pride. Here is the scholar in politics, type of the Adamses, Burkes, Gladstones, Sumners, and Lowells, whose college training and book learning, whose historical knowledge, esthetic taste, classical erudition, or poetical genius, rather than disqualifying them for higher politics, fitted them the better to serve their country and add luster to the national name. If the tradition that Isaiah was put to death by being sawn asunder at the command of King Manasseh may be trusted, that crime alone would be a very significant index of the degeneracy of the times and a proof of the heroic and martyr spirit of the prophets. A nation cannot poison a Socrates, behead a Paul, burn a Huss, banish a Dante, send a Cranmer to the stake, or saw asunder an Isaiah until it has lost both its righteousness and intellectualism, its power to appreciate the lofty character and the God-like mind. Those lips which the seraph had touched with a live coal from the altar of heaven were ever faithful to speak with burning, holy eloquence the word of God to men.

Jeremiah, while yet comparatively youthful, was called to the prophetic office. Josiah, but twenty-one years old, was on the throne of Judah. From his coronation at the age of eight years he had proved himself a reformer bent upon uprooting idolatry and reviving Jehovah-worship. The prophet and the king saw eye to eye in the hopeful reaction from the degrading and demoralizing Baalism which had driven both nations to the brink of destruction. The hopes of the righteous and patriotic few, however, were soon dashed to the ground. Josiah, at the early age of forty, was slain in the battle of Megiddo while resisting with patriotic valor the hostile invasion of the Egyptians. What Jehoahaz, the choice of the people, might have accomplished in the way of reformatations inaugurated by his father we only surmise, as his short reign of three months ended with his being kidnapped and sent in chains to Egypt, where he died in exile. The Egyptian power placed Jehoiakim, the elder brother of Jehoahaz, on the throne of Judah. The oppression of labor, the extravagance and profligacy of royalty, and the general demoralization which followed gave Jeremiah his prophetic opportunity. He found himself face to face with a new problem. He was now called upon, not to assist in a glorious reformation, but to resist an inglorious reaction from reformation, and his word of exhortation, encouragement, and hope became a cry of woe, alarm, warning, threatening, and lamentation. The untimely death of Josiah called forth his lamentation, and the prophet was instrumental in inaugurating a day of national mourning for this virtuous, God-fearing king.

Jehoiakim, the usurper, proved to be an enemy of true prophetism, while he encouraged that counterfeit or false prophetism which had grown up and had been encouraged by wicked kings and wicked people to cry "peace, peace," when there was no "peace," and to speak unto them "smooth things" when the rugged truth would not be tolerated. That age would not hear its apostasy denounced; it was deaf to all the warnings of danger. Jeremiah, therefore, found himself held in daily derision, mocked and insulted by a people who had in their fickleness soon forgotten the virtues of Josiah and the beneficence of his reign, and had surrendered themselves to the tyranny of Jehoiakim and the indecencies of Baalism. Jeremiah, the



ISAIAH.

prophet of this time, was preëminently a thinker and teacher, of somber, melancholy mood. Austere, fearless, denunciatory, and logically pessimistic, he stood out in bold relief from the background of social frivolity and national degeneracy. He was no Democritus, to laugh away the follies of his time. He was, rather, the Diogenes of prophets, vainly looking through the streets of Jerusalem for a single man that loved righteousness. The lantern of truth and justice was ever lighted and in his hand, nor did he

“Gently scan your fellow-man.”

He could not speak smooth things; rough things were the only medicine for the maladies of the age. He was no compromiser, no political or moral juggler. He never learned to

“Suit the truth to ears polite,
And snugly keep damnation out of sight.”

National damnation was before them. How could he, as a patriot and a prophet of the Most High God, do otherwise than lift up his voice and cry aloud and spare not? He stood as a wall of brass, to use his own apt figure. He tried to influence the national mind by the power of thought and the authority of truth. His literary work, in its sad, pathetic spirit, full of tears and woe, became the vehicle of the most intense and spiritual prophecy. No inspired writer reached profounder depths or seemed more completely mastered by the authority of the divine purpose than Jeremiah. If he possessed less of Shakspeare's myriad-mindedness, and of Milton's starry splendor, than Isaiah, he revealed greater Dantean depth and seriousness.

The discovery of the long-lost book of the law when Josiah was repairing the temple made a profound impression upon the people and gave a mighty impetus to the revival of Jehovah-worship. Jeremiah's message came just at that time of new spiritual awakening and received willing, eager attention. But when the reaction set in the prophet became unfashionable, irritating, and intolerable. He foretold the Babylonian Captivity, and, seeing the inevitable calamity, he advised submission to Nebuchadnezzar as the only policy that would save the people from untold suffering. The overthrow of Judah and the destruction of Jerusalem were so clearly foreseen that he hesitated not to prepare the people for the calamity, and to make the suffering and misery as light as possible. Pashur, the governor of the temple, smote the prophet on the mouth for his outspoken convictions, and then put him in the stocks to become the butt of ridicule. Enraged by his warnings, the people in power and place sought again and again to kill him. The spirit of gloom and discouragement which overtook Elijah under the juniper tree finally took possession of Jeremiah, and he cursed the day he was born. He prophesied the universal conquests of Nebuchadnezzar. In the significant symbolism of wooden yokes, which he made and sent to the kings of the surrounding nations, he set forth the subjugation of the world to the power of Babylon. To teach by this same powerful symbolic action the subjugation of Judah, he wore a yoke and chain upon his own neck. He was regarded as a madman, and his arrest was ordered. Jehoiakim decreed his death for his supposed hostility to the throne and sympathy with the enemies of his country; whereas he was, with breaking heart, only foretelling by divine inspiration the inevitable results of the nation's apostasy. Of all the noble and fearless prophets who had foreseen the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the chosen people, Jeremiah alone was compelled to witness the fulfillment of the prophecies, the siege and downfall of the holy city. While the conqueror was thundering at the gates of Jerusalem, he was fearlessly and yet regretfully preparing the people's minds for the worst, even for the triumph of Chaldean arms and the subjugation of Judah. For this he was imprisoned, and Zedekiah gave him up to those who hated him and thirsted for his blood. He was thrust into a loathsome dungeon, where he sank into the mire a most pitiable object, the victim of the nation's idolatrous insanity. He was still in prison, though he had been released from this foul pit, when the captain of Nebuchadnezzar, by order of the Chaldean

king, released him. How truly was history giving wisdom and authority to the proverb: "A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country"!

Nebuchadnezzar honored the prophet; he could see that this righteous, gifted man was superior to his people and to his age. By order of the Chaldean conqueror, Jeremiah was given his choice of residence either in Chaldea or in Judah. He patriotically elected to remain in his native land. Here he counseled the governors who had been established by the Chaldean power, and became to them, as previously he had been to the kings of Judah, the warning and advising voice of God. He continued, also, to counsel his own countrymen. The upper classes, and the more useful middle classes, comprising the artificers and skilled workmen, had been carried off into captivity, not only to weaken the nation, but to populate certain undeveloped regions of Nebuchadnezzar's dominions and to strengthen the arts and industries of Chaldea, while Chaldean colonists had been settled in the land; and this stern policy had reduced the remnant of Judah, although still numerous, to despair. But when an exodus into Egypt, under the advice and leadership of Johanan, was proposed, Jeremiah protested, and exhorted the people to remain where they were. The prophet's advice was not heeded, and when the people fled into Egypt, Jeremiah accompanied them. There he prophesied, and there, virtually a captive in the very land whence Moses, centuries before, had led the chosen people, he spent his last days in humiliation among the humblest remnants of a once proud and mighty race. His death was a martyrdom. If the traditions may be relied upon, Jeremiah was buried in that foreign land, the national *bête noire* of the Hebrew race. In later times Alexander the Great, who had once gone to visit Diogenes, the philosopher, and said: "Were I not Alexander, I should choose to be Diogenes," had the bones of the Hebrew prophet reinterred at Alexandria. The greatest pagan kings, Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander, were high-minded enough to respect, honor, and revere, not only the genius but the virtues of a prophet whom the Jewish kings had become too blind, too ignorant, too bestial, even to understand or to tolerate. This sad, sublime life—this majestic, melancholy character—must ever impress the student of history as a rebuke to a nation's depravity, a contrast to corrupt imperialism, and proof of the fact that even in the darkest hour of social and national degeneracy God hath not left himself without a witness. At all times there are in every land, among every people, great, potent, light-bearing individualities who become in their own degree and measure, with all their human limitations, the incarnations of God's truth, the monuments of his grace and the epitomes of the redemptive, sanctifying possibilities of his purpose and his word. The Book of Jeremiah is the prophet's autobiography and the nation's obituary.

Ezekiel, the last of these mighty men who created the prophetic literature of the Hebrews, prophesied in captivity. Jeremiah had not gone with his people over into Chaldea, but God raised up from among that captive people a true successor of the weeping prophet. He may have been a pupil of Jeremiah.

Yonder on Chebar's mournful banks, Ezekiel is for the first time blessed with visions—visions more startling, grand, and awe-inspiring than any that had ever before greeted the inner eye of God's inspired seers. As the gift of miracles was to Elijah, so was the gift of visions to Ezekiel, the striking, impressive characteristic of his prophetic mission. Visionary prophetism reaches its zenith glory in the dreams of Ezekiel. This writer was highly educated and his work was purely intellectual. He was the scholar-prophet; not the scholar in affairs, in politics, in action, like Isaiah. As Elijah sought the solitude of the cave or mountain, Ezekiel enjoyed the seclusion of the study. If the former was the hermit of the wilderness, the latter was the hermit of the library. What an intense intellectualism penetrates all his rhetorical forms! What dramatic fire glows in all those figures! What audacity of thought! What fearful, awful heights the sweeping pinions of his imagination dare attempt! It is

the end, the utmost limit, of literary prophetism — not the perfection of it, but rather the extravagance, the exaggeration of it.

Ezekiel went beyond the limits of the purest literary art in prophetism. But was his not a message, which, in its sweep and power, its awfulness and sublimity, transcended art and shook off the shackles of esthetic limitation and restraint? Did not the spirit and genius of prophetism at last soar out and beyond the earth and the skies, free, lost, to be consumed a sacrifice in the heavenly fires from which it came?

It was a dark time. The Holy City was in ashes. A nation's glory had been quenched in blood. A once mighty people were in chains; their harp was on the willows and the yoke was on their necks. The glorious past was far away; the glorious future farther still. But in the darkness there was hope. The prophet, truest friend of God and truest friend of the people, brings words of comfort to a nation's broken heart. Ezekiel's book was a light to the people in exile. Although in his first prophecies he foretold the overthrow of Jerusalem, which soon followed, and although he unerringly predicted the universal triumph of Chaldean arms over the surrounding nations, there was running through all those prophecies of war, ruin, conquest, and subjugation, a gleam of light which burst at last from out the clouds and gloom into the full and joyous splendors of the Messianic hope. Standing in the midst of desolations, the crashing of thrones and the wrecks of empires, this great-eyed man of prophecy, penetrating the future, beheld the rise of the empire of righteousness, the everlasting and universal Kingdom of God.

The post-exilic prophets, with all their hopefulness and spirituality, reveal the decline of literary prophetism. The golden age had passed. The glory of Hebrew letters, like the might of Hebrew arms, was of the yesterdays. That favored race was never more to know a military prowess like David's, to boast an art like that which culminated in the creation of Solomon's Temple, to produce a prophetic literature equal to that which came from the inspired genius of Joel, Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DECLINE AND CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL.

IN fulfillment of the prophecy of Elisha, King Jehoash gained three notable victories over the Syrians before he passed away and left the royal power to his son, Jeroboam II. This name, Jeroboam, has a startling significance to the kingdom of Israel. There was no king of their sad, eventful history who was more responsible for the partition of the original kingdom and for the conglomerate system of worship which had been established and maintained as the national religion than the first Jeroboam. For this worship of the golden calf, which had never been uprooted, God blamed him. He it was who caused the people to sin as he led them to substitute this heathenish idolatry for the Jehovah-worship, which had been their religion since God raised them up as a people.

The reign of Jeroboam II., lasting forty-one years, might have seemed, at a superficial glance, to be characterized by a revival of the pristine military and industrial vigor, but a more careful study of the national conditions must have convinced any philosophical mind that the nation was not rising to a substantial and abiding prosperity, but was riding on the crest of a wave that was about to dash it to fragments against the might of foreign conquerors. It was a

reign of greater light than Israel had known for years, but that new light was the last flame that leapt up from the smoldering embers, ere they lost their fire forever and were swept as ashes before the whirlwind. It was the last convulsive throb of the national heart, ere it sank into death and oblivion. The restoration of many of the ancient boundaries, made possible by the weakening of the Syrian power and the encroachments of the new power of Assyria upon this ancient enemy of Israel, gave Jeroboam II. a prestige which had not been enjoyed by any other king since the founding of Israel. With this reign began the higher literary life of the new kingdom. Amos and Hosea appeared with their poetical prophetism to teach a new intellectual life, as well as to inspire, if possible, a revival of Jehovah-worship. The hopes which the reviving taste, intellectualism, wealth, and military power kindled, were soon quenched by the misfortunes that followed the brilliant reign of Jeroboam.

Zachariah reigned but six months when he was assassinated by the rebellious Shallum. This usurper, who had captured the throne, lived to enjoy his cruelly earned power but a single month when Menahem dispatched him and grasped the scepter, which he wielded for ten years. A more detestable, cruel, inhuman wretch never sat on Israel's throne. His brutal treatment of women was enough to brand him a monster. Pekahiah, his successor, could maintain his supremacy but two years when Pekah, a son of one of the king's captains, killed him. After twenty years this murderer was murdered and Hoshea seated himself upon the tottering throne, destined to fall with it and with the kingdom before the conquering power of the Assyrians. The invading nations had been growing more bold and insolent as they saw the decline of Israel, resulting from internal degeneracy and the corruption of the throne. As Rome in her decline tempted the ambition of conquerors who watched and waited for the opportune moment in which to sweep from the north with overwhelming force to complete the conquest of the once mighty empire of the Cæsars, so Syrians, Egyptians, and Assyrians watched with greedy, ambitious eyes the waning of Israel's power and saw the near approach of her inevitable subjugation.

A national power had been developing in the East which was destined to swallow up all other powers and assume universal empire; Syria, Egypt, and Israel were doomed. Assyria was rising to assert dominion over the world and was rapidly advancing her haughty arms to the consummation of this ambitious design. Great Babylon was in the ascendancy. During the reign of the inhuman Menahem, Pul, the king of Assyria, came against Samaria with a force which proved irresistible, except by the power of bribery. Gold has often been a more effectual resisting agency than steel, and many an invader has been bought off who could not have been fought off. The cruel and unjust object of historic warfare appears almost invariably to have been subjugation and tribute. Nations have built their own greatness on the ruin of others. They have replenished their own treasures by impoverishing and robbing their neighbor countries. The most abundant source of national wealth and prosperity by the old system of political economy was conquest and plunder. Hence the people were educated to war rather than to peaceful industry. The development of the natural resources of a country has often been neglected for the development of military power. A study of the great kingdoms of ancient history reveals the fact that statesmen, rulers, and people have recognized conquest, oppression, and tribute as the true philosophy of national wealth. So Assyria maintained, and the Macedonian power, and Rome, and Carthage. The strong nations did not hesitate to conquer the weak, despoil them of their meager wealth, and exact unwilling tribute from subjugated and impoverished peoples. To-day, however, in this more enlightened age, every great nation should be able to glory in the fact that she never humbled a weaker power, oppressed a sister state, or robbed any people to enrich herself. Let her boast that the philosophy of her wealth is the intelligent industry of her citizens, and that by the development of her natural resources and the inventions of her genius, rather than by the terror of her arms, she builds up

her national greatness and teaches the new political economy that the only legitimate source of national wealth is to be found in honest toil and enlightened, creative thought.

Pul took money — 1,000 talents of silver — and left Menahem in possession of his throne. The Assyrian, doubtless, obtained all he came for, and was content, without the shedding of Assyrian blood, to bring his invasion to so profitable an issue. The ambitious and greedy power which could exact such terms of the kingdom of Israel had another very satisfactory proof of Israel's weakness and rapid decline. Assyria was, therefore, but the more encouraged completely to despoil the falling empire of her remaining wealth and hasten the catastrophe of her ruin as a political factor on the earth. The invasion of the Assyrians led by Pul was soon followed by the still more important, and disastrous invasion of Tiglath-Pileser in the reign of Pekah. It is very difficult to place this Assyrian, Pul. His name does not appear in the Assyrian records. He may have been a general who, in the name of the Assyrian king, made conquests. He may have been Tiglath-Pileser himself. Rezin and Pekah had formed an alliance, offensive and defensive, between Syria and Israel, much to the alarm and apprehension of Jotham and Ahaz, kings of Judah. This alliance was formed with the intention of waging war against Judah and overthrowing the Davidic dynasty. It was through the solicitations of Ahaz, richly backed by money considerations, that Tiglath-Pileser essayed the conquest of these allied powers. He came on with the might of his victorious arms and swept all opposition before him, assaulting and taking city after city, and leading away captive tribe after tribe of that once proud and mighty, but now degenerate and contemptible people, who still, in their shame and national humiliation, boasted the haughty name of Israel. It demanded no great genius to overcome the tottering kingdom which from the beginning had been founded on the sand of a demoralizing idolatry. Long had God been patient with this people, while in defiance of his laws and his prophets they had been sowing to the wind. Now, the harvest time in God's providential years has come, and by the inevitable logic that belongs to the operation of moral principle in society this careless, defiant race is beginning to reap the whirlwind. A comparatively insignificant creature becomes their captor. The tradition is that Tiglath-Pileser did not belong to a race of kings. Although he was the founder of a new dynasty, he had risen from the humble occupation of a gardener to the trade of conquest and sovereignty. Here the pruning hook is beaten into the spear, and the plowshare into the sword, and the cultivator of vegetables becomes the conqueror of nations and ruler of empires. Again the dry and dusty lips of archæology speak in harmony with the ever-living word of inspiration, and from the very ashes of vanished kingdoms, from the graves of extinct nations, and the almost forgotten mausoleums of ancient civilizations comes a voice of testimony to corroborate the voice of prophet and historian. Tiglath-Pileser is a name familiar to archæology as it is found on slabs and cylinders which have preserved, through more than twenty-five centuries, the records of that olden time, and with his name are associated the names of the kings of Judah, Israel, and Syria, who came to dread the swift power of his arms, as in later times the Romans trembled at the name of Attila, the Hun. Broken and shattered by these two Assyrian invasions, Israel was soon fated to receive the third and final blow which would seal her national doom.

Pekah, after an unfortunate but eventful reign of twenty years, was assassinated by Hoshea, who succeeded, after great opposition and bloody civil war, in establishing himself upon the throne. He was destined to be the last of a line of kings, beginning with Jeroboam, whose reigns were characterized by the most revolting political crimes and the basest social and religious impurities that stain the records of ancient history. Blow after blow had fallen upon the wretched people. Assyria's mighty arm gathered strength by conquest until at last Shalmanezzer completed what Pul and Tiglath-Pileser began — the destruction, subjugation, and captivity of the ten tribes of Israel. Hoshea, the last king of Israel, in his extremity and despair sought the aid of So, the king of Egypt, and made a futile endeavor to shake off the



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yoke of Assyria which had been imposed by Pul and Tiglath-Pileser in their successful invasions. After a siege of three years or more, Samaria was taken and destroyed. Sargon ended the conquest inaugurated by Shalmanezar, and drove the children of Israel into captivity. The record of this siege and captivity is preserved in the Assyrian inscriptions. The number led into captivity is stated on the Assyrian monuments to have been 27,280 men.

While Israel was declining, Assyrian civilization was advancing rapidly toward its culminating power and splendor. Sargon embodied the spirit of the new national power, and proved himself to be the most progressive and enlightened monarch of his age. The internal improvements of his empire spoke as highly of his genius and character as his military exploits of his ambition. He developed the resources of his dominions and peopled unpopulated districts with the captives taken in war. He built and embellished cities, encouraged the arts and sciences, waged extensive and important wars against the greatest powers, and became, if we may judge by Assyrian sculptures, inscriptions, and monuments, one of the most powerful and progressive of the Assyrian monarchs. What a contrast to any one of those kings whose crimes and ignorance hastened the decline and sealed the doom of Israel! Hoshea, who had assassinated a king to capture a crown and usurp a throne, was taken by the Assyrian and ignominiously put to death. The throne was empty. The kingdom was destroyed. The people were led away captive to colonize the banks of the Euphrates and develop the agricultural resources of a strange land, which was to be enriched more by the industry of a subjugated and captive people than by the spoils of war, the tribute of vassals, or the golden treasures of plundered palaces and temples.

The Israelites were undoubtedly the best of agriculturalists, if not the foremost artisans and mechanics, and they must have introduced a much needed element of prosperity into the practical, political economy of Assyria. They were given positions of trust, and, as with Moses and Joseph earlier in Egypt, and Daniel and Zerubbabel in Babylon, their best men were honored with responsibilities of office. The masses of the captive people, however, were doubtless put to agricultural pursuits for the development of the material resources of the land. Herein, moreover, they became to the Assyrians most helpful instructors in the industrial sciences.

Rennel finds an historical analogy, if not parallel, between the policy of Sargon of Assyria and Peter the Great of Russia. The latter sent the captive Swedes into Siberia, not only to reclaim the dreary waste and develop its natural possibilities, but also to introduce to the native inhabitants the superior arts, sciences, and manners which had been cultivated by the Swedes. It may be supposed that Sargon was too sagacious to lead all Israel away captive—that would have been an undertaking of very questionable policy, if not a commissary impossibility. The expatriation of at least 1,000,000 of people would have involved difficulties of transportation and expense which might well have daunted the wisdom of a Sargon. If, as the Assyrian inscriptions indicate, only about 28,000 were expatriated, or about one out of every thirty-five, then it is quite reasonable to suppose that Sargon was as wise as Nebuchadnezzar, who, in after times, led away into captivity only picked men—men who stood in the first rank as artisans, warriors, scholars, agriculturalists, and laborers; the able-bodied and able-minded of Israel. He could not have been so impolitic as to have emptied all the poverty, viciousness, and incompetency of that degenerate nation into his own land to poison and degrade it. If the conqueror, however, despoiled Israel of her best social, intellectual, military, and industrial elements, and left behind him in the subjugated land only the base, incompetent and worthless, how completely shattered and ruined must the conquered nation have been!

The fate of the ten tribes has been one of the most perplexing problems of history, and theories without number have been invented to account for their whereabouts subsequent to their captivity and settlement in "Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes." The Afghans, the Tartars, the Nestorians, the Mexicans, the North American

Indians, and even the Anglo-Saxons, have been recognized as the descendants of the "lost ten tribes" by theorists who have considered the solution of this problem one of the most essential achievements of the historian. But it is coming to be admitted more and more conclusively that the national and tribal identity of the ten tribes of the Assyrian Captivity has been absolutely destroyed — destroyed through social, political, and even religious absorption and assimilation by other nations and peoples.

The ten tribes had established their independent nationalism on a new religious basis, and, by the act of Jeroboam in instituting the bull-worship as the national religion, they repudiated the fundamental principle of the ancient theocratic constitution. From that point they began their departure from true Israelism — from true national, and religious, and even racial Israelism. The introduction of a foreign and idolatrous cultus was an introduction of heathenism into the social life and national character. They were no longer a separate and peculiar people. Their alliances — military, commercial, and even matrimonial — separated them more and more widely from the original Israelitish type. When the picked men of the nation were expatriated, Sargon sent over into the conquered land colonies of Assyrians, who introduced their foreign customs and religions. This mingling of Assyrian and Israelitish elements reduced still more the fraction of original blood and genius. Possibly many of the remaining Israelites were absorbed by Judah after the Assyrian, and before the Babylonian Captivity.

The captives were also doubtless assimilated by the Assyrians, Medes, and Persians, and, by intermarriage, lost their tribal and even racial identity. Many of those captives may have preserved and handed down to their children their Israelitish characteristics, and when Judah, in after years, was led away into captivity, the descendants of these faithful few may have mingled with the newly expatriated tribes, to be finally absorbed by them, and on the return after the seventy years' exile they may have lost their tribal identity in the one new Jewish type which remained to carry out the will and purpose of God until Shiloh came.

Whatever may be the true philosophy of the disappearance of the ten tribes as a distinct and historic national organism, the true significance and the divine meaning of it seems to be, the fulfillment of the word of prophecy. The Lord removed Israel out of his sight — suffered its national annihilation. And thus perished forever a form of nationalism which denied the spirit of righteousness, forsook the living God, and based itself on a cultus of superstition, idolatry, and sensualism.

CHAPTER X.

JUDAH AT WAR.

THE high national expectations which had been inspired in the southern kingdom by the genius and devotion of Jehoshaphat were destined to vanish like the baseless fabric of a vision. Joram came to the Davidic throne under most favorable auspices. His illustrious father had made the name of Judah honorable among the nations, and the surrounding world stood in wholesome awe of her prowess. Internal harmony and prosperity, with external peace, united to furnish the conditions for great commercial, intellectual, and spiritual progress. But Joram, the heir of wealth and royalty, displayed none of his father's virtues, nor had he the ability or inclination to carry out the improvements and reforms inaugurated by Jehoshaphat. It is little in extenuation of his idolatry and crime, that one may argue the dominating influence of his wife. But what better could have been expected to come from his alliance with Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel? Through her influence, Joram turned from his father's religion, accepted idolatry — the religion of his father-in-law — quenched the fires of spiritual and intellectual revival which had leaped to new life, murdered his own brothers, and proved himself the antithesis of his father in character, and worthy in all wickedness of his idolatrous consort.

No more revolting sins and crimes have ever been perpetrated than those which have been instigated by conscienceless and vicious women. The record of wifely influence would form a most instructive chapter in the political and religious history of this world. Man has never accomplished more glorious deeds than when under the influence of noble, virtuous, and devoted woman, nor has he ever sunk to lower depths of infamy than those to which the influence of vicious woman has had the power to plunge him. The character of Esther, shining with the beauty of her personal charms and her transcendent virtues, becomes a power in history and an element in the philosophy of a nation's destiny by the influence which she exercises so righteously over the illustrious Ahasuerus. The high-minded Calpurnia, whose name was the synonym of virtue in Rome, swayed an almost imperial scepter over the will and judgment no less than over the stern affections of Julius Cæsar, and it was in disobedience of the request of that devoted wife that he went forth unsuspectingly to meet assassination on the fatal Ides of March. Trajan owed his enviable and unique title of "the good emperor" to the influence of his chaste, intelligent, and patriotic wife, Plotina. The military triumph, if not the imperial ascendancy of Septimius Severus, was largely due to the charming and truly womanly influence of Julia Domna. When the Christian missionaries first appeared in England it was through the solicitations of Bertha that Ethelbert admitted to Kent the religion of his Christian wife, and made possible the evangelization of the English people. A similar influence Clotilda had over Clovis, the first Christian king of the Franks, who, in the midst of battle, called upon Clotilda's God, and, winning the battle, became a convert to Christianity, and aided the barbarism of the Franks to yield to the refining, civilizing influences of the Gospel. What a contrast appears when the student turns to a consideration of the influence of Messalina over Emperor Claudius; Lady Macbeth over her husband, the Thane of Cawdor; of Jezebel over Ahab; and of Athaliah over Joram! The murder of Joram's brothers was instigated by Athaliah, whose ambition was more ungovernable and cruel than a Jezebel's or a Lady Macbeth's.

The long and happy era of international peace which Judah had enjoyed through the closing years of Jehoshaphat's reign came to a sudden end when the idolatrous Joram had finally seated himself upon the throne. Wars broke out in which it was soon demonstrated that



BIDA.

ENTRANCE TO NABLOUS.

the surrounding nations had no longer to stand in awe of the power of a Jehoshaphat or fear the arms of Judah. The Edomites were emboldened by their very contempt of Joram to strike for their independence, which they successfully achieved. The idolatry and wickedness of this king called forth a remarkable letter from Elijah, who, though a prophet to Israel rather than to Judah, felt himself called upon to rebuke the sins of Joram as he had warned and reprimanded Ahab. The stern, uncompromising Tishbite forewarned the profligate and idolatrous king of the plague which was to destroy his wives and children and bring him to a most horrible death. Deaf to the voice of God, Joram continued in his corrupt career until one distress followed another in quick succession — rebellion, invasion, the ravages of Philistines and Arabians, the captivity of his wives and children and the destruction of his entire house, with the single exception of Ahaziah. This unhappy heir of a polluted throne, Ahaziah, reigned but one year, when, on his visit to Jehoram, the king of Israel, he was slain in the conflict which ended Jehoram's reign and vested the imperial power of Israel in Jehu. The death of Ahaziah brought his mother Athaliah once more into prominence, and her ambition became more than ever notorious, unpatriotic, and vicious. She inhumanly grasped political power by the butchery of her own kindred, putting out of the way every obstacle to sovereign authority by killing all that remained of the house of Joram. One only person escaped her cruel purposes — that was her little grandson Jehoash, whom she had tried to kill, but who was saved through the instrumentality of his aunt Jehoshеba. For six years the boy was hid in the temple. When, at the age of seven, Jehoash was proclaimed king, Athaliah, who called the young ruler's pretensions treason, was put to death. A child was now on Judah's throne, but he had been educated from infancy by the righteous priest Jehoiada, who came to be the power behind the throne. A reaction set in against the idolatry which Joram, Ahaziah, and Athaliah had revived. The temples of Baal were torn down, the house of the Lord was repaired, and the worship of the fathers was restored. The idolatrous tendency of the nation, however, was soon manifest; the revolution inaugurated by the boy-king was only temporary and superficial. On the death of the good priest Jehoiada, who had been the real reformer while the king had been but an instrument in his hands, the influence which surrounded Jehoash proved him to be most fickle and irresolute, without a mind or a policy of his own. The strong undercurrent of idolatrous tendency soon became the uppermost current and swept the king along into the very maelstrom from which it had been vainly hoped he would save the nation. It seems almost incredible that this king, brought up in the very temple and educated for the throne by the godly Jehoiada, should live to see the son of that faithful priest stoned to death for teaching, as his father had done before him, the pure and holy religion of Jehovah. Nay, the king himself ordered that Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, should be thus cruelly requited for his faithful and fearless warnings. The calamities which were predicted by the martyr-priest, as he lay dying in the court of the house of the Lord, were speedily visited upon Judah and her king. Twice did the Syrians come up against the kingdom of Judah. In the first instance they were led by the fierce Hazael, who exacted enormous tribute as the price of sparing Jerusalem. In the second instance the forces of Jehoash were overwhelmed; his princes and courtiers were slain, and Jerusalem was sacked. The king, who began his reign as a reformer, then fell from his high eminence into idolatry with its attendant vices, became the ungrateful, cruel murderer of the good priest Zechariah, and finally ended his career in humiliation and disgrace at the feet of his Syrian conquerors and as the victim of assassination. Not on the field of battle, defending his country and the faith of his fathers, was he permitted gloriously and patriotically to die, but while he slept in his bed he was murdered by his servants.

Amaziah, the son of Jehoash, came to power with a military talent which was hardly commensurate with his ambition. After having visited punishment upon the assassins of his

father he proceeded against the Edomites and Amalekites with an army of 300,000 young men, the glory of Judah and Benjamin. He sought in this enterprise the assistance of Israel. For the specified amount of 100 talents of silver he secured 100,000 allies. Here, however, was shown the regard which was still paid to the prophetic office. Amaziah had begun his reign in the spirit of a reformer, giving hopes of an anti-idolatrous administration. He was, accordingly, respectful to the prophets, weighed well their advice, and profited by their instruction. When, therefore, this alliance was formed with the still more idolatrous kingdom of Israel in the expedition against the Edomites, the prophet protested and warned Amaziah of evil consequences. The king took warning, and although he had paid over the stipulated price of 100 talents he dismissed the 100,000 Israelitish soldiers, in obedience to what he regarded as the command of God, and went forth in the favor of the Lord to conquer his enemies and enrich his empire with the spoils of war. But now a remarkable spectacle is presented to the student of those changeable times and fickle peoples. After having overcome the military power of the Edomites, the king of Judah is himself overcome by the idolatry of the conquered nation, and the humiliating spectacle is witnessed of Amaziah's bowing down before the idols of Edom. This is not unparalleled in history; other instances may be cited wherein the conquerors have accepted the religion of their conquered enemies. A conspicuous instance was the conversion of the Goths and Vandals by the Christian Greeks and Romans whom they had subjugated. This, however, can hardly be cited as a parallel case to that of Amaziah's perversion to Edomite idolatry. What an opportunity that king had for teaching the conquered nation the pure and spiritual religion of Jehovah! How thoroughly permeated with the spirit of idolatry he must have been when, though repudiating the idolatry which was cursing his own land, he accepted the superstition of a less enlightened people! It seemed to be in the blood of the people—an hereditary tendency to idolatry which had come from a long and persistent disregard of the very laws and revelations of which they were the divinely appointed custodians. The virus of idolatry was poisoning the life-blood of the whole body politic, and the nation, in her rulers and people, was losing God and power.

The conquest of Edom emboldened Amaziah to attempt a more ambitious enterprise—nothing less than the invasion of the northern kingdom, the subjugation of Israel, and the reunion of the dismembered empire on the ancient political if not theocratic foundation of the Davidic nationalism. This was not an unworthy ambition, save in the methods proposed. That, however, was not a time of international amity, nor had diplomacy come to be one of the fine arts. International questions, in those rough and bloody days, were settled at the point of the sword; might made right. Amaziah proposed no diplomatic palaver, no congress of statesmen and prophets, to discuss the restoration of a united empire. He boldly and self-confidently sent a challenge to Jehoash, the king of Israel, to meet him face to face in battle—that is to say, army to army, and nation to nation. It was a challenge to international duel. He threw down the gage of battle with an insolence and a braggadocio quite unbecoming either a soldier or a king. He must have been startled by the proud and courageous reply of Jehoash. That king was not to be trifled with, for with all his faults he was no coward that he should tremble before the noisy threats of a braggart. The reply which the king of Israel made to the challenge of Amaziah was significant, not to say picturesque. It was certainly a very pointed bit of military rhetoric, reminding us of the pictorial correspondence carried on between Alexander the Great of Macedon and Darius the Persian. When Alexander scornfully refused to pay Darius III., surnamed Codomannus, a tribute of 1,000 golden eggs, the Persian sent him a bat and ball, to ridicule his youth, and a bag of seeds, to warn him of the numbers of the Persian army. Alexander replied: "With this bat will I strike the ball of your king's dominions," and, giving the seed to a fowl, "Thus will I devour his army." He also returned to Darius a wild melon whose bitterness was emblematic of the woe and sorrow they should be

forced to endure. When Darius Hystaspes invaded Scythia and demanded earth and water in token of submission, the Scythians promptly and defiantly replied by sending to him, by messenger, a bird, a mouse, a frog, and a bundle of arrows, which meant: "Fly into the air like birds, hide in the ground like mice, dive into the water like frogs, or our arrows will pierce you." When Amaziah sent the challenge to Jehoash of Israel: "Come, let us look one another in the face," Jehoash returned the significant answer: "The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trod down the thistle." If we consider this a reply to Amaziah's proposition for the union of the kingdoms, backed by the threat of force and war, it evidently means that the king of Israel looked upon himself as the majestic cedar and upon his kingdom as the daughter of the cedar, while he regarded Amaziah as the contemptible thistle or brier, and the kingdom of Judah as the son of the thistle. The wild beast rushing through Lebanon meant war in its ravages, and if war came it would tread down the thistle, it would crush Amaziah. Jehoash acts a very manly part in warning the king of Judah to curb his ambition and be content with his conquest of Edom, but the hot-headed Amaziah spurns advice and at Beth-shemesh reaps the bitter consequences in an overwhelming defeat and the complete rout of his army. He was himself made a prisoner and led a disgraced and humiliated captive to his own capital, which was plundered by the victorious army of Israel. That sad story, so often repeated, is told once more of how the walls of Jerusalem were broken down, the very temple was despoiled of its silver, and gold, and sacred vessels, the treasury of the king's house was looted, while hostages were taken away into Samaria. Thus was the "thistle of Lebanon" trodden down by the "wild beast"—Amaziah and his kingdom crushed and laid waste by war!

The record of the conspiracy which was hatched against Amaziah becomes interesting at this time from the fact that archæology is bringing to sight the ruins of the long-hidden Lachish to which Amaziah fled, where he was assassinated, and whence they brought him on horses to be buried in Jerusalem with his fathers. This Lachish was an ancient city which Joshua besieged and captured in his time, fully 700 years before the days of Amaziah. Rehoboam evidently rebuilt or restored and fortified it, but it afterward fell into the hands of the Assyrians. The last mention made of it was not later than the time of Jeremiah, fully 2,500 years ago. But to-day the spade of the archæologist is bringing the ruins of this ancient city to light and verifying in a measure the Word of God by proving that Lachish had an existence in harmony with the Hebrew records. Sixteen miles east of Gaza and twenty-three miles west of Hebron stands Tel-el-Hesy, a mound which the explorer has proven to be a mound of many cities. The ruins of one city rise above another, until eight separate and distinct cities are identified, the first of which was founded 500 years before the children of Israel conquered and occupied the land. Each city has left the evidences of its character to be interpreted by this age. The implements of war and industry in stone, bronze, and iron; the pottery, statuary, idols, tablets, cylinders, and scarabs speak of their Amorite, Phœnician, Egyptian, or Greek origin. As the excavations progress, more and more evidence appears in support of the position taken by Dr. Petrie that this is the site of ancient Lachish, which, during the many centuries of its existence, passed through all the changes which the influences of various civilizations wrought in its character. Here it was that Amaziah sought asylum from the conspirators, and here he was slain. Possibly the further explorations of this Tel may bring to light records of Jewish import to confirm still more positively the history preserved in the Holy Scriptures.

Isaiah's biography of Uzziah has been lost, else might we have a complete and satisfactory history of the next reign, which was distinguished for its brilliancy. It would not be claiming too much for Uzziah, the son and successor of Amaziah, to say he brought to the throne extraordinary powers of mind, if not true genius. Nor was his virtue inferior to his intelligence.

Although but sixteen years old when he assumed the crown, he immediately won the favor of the Lord and the good will of the people who had called him to the throne. He devoted himself to the much-needed internal improvements of the kingdom, and proved himself the friend and benefactor of the husbandmen who reared the flocks and tilled the soil. He was a lover of husbandry, and doubtless understood that a nation's wealth and prosperity must come from the soil by the noble science and art of agriculture. Like Cincinnatus of the old Roman days, Uzziah appreciated both the delights and profits of agricultural pursuits, and rejoiced in his own thrifty vineyards. He was in no wise unfitted for the high position of political sovereignty by the love he had for the farm. Among the internal improvements which Uzziah inaugurated were wells dug in the wilderness and towers built for the defense of flocks which suffered from the attacks of wild beasts and robbers. The walls of Jerusalem were repaired; cities were fortified, and while all the arts of peace were revived and the wealth-producing farmers, and cattle-raisers, and wool-growers were given every advantage for prosperity that Uzziah's truly economic genius could devise, at the same time the possibilities of war were kept in view, and the invasion of hostile nations was carefully provided against. The king raised a magnificent army and thoroughly equipped his soldiers for aggressive and defensive war. Here Uzziah displayed an inventive no less than an economic and military genius. It would seem that Uzziah was the inventor of the first machinery for attacking and defending fortified and walled cities. Although it is claimed by some writers that the catapult, an engine for throwing great stones, was the invention of Dionysius of Syracuse, in 399 B. C., and the battering-ram for demolishing walls and fortifications was invented by Artemon, a Greek, and first employed by Pericles, in 441 B. C., it would seem from more reliable data that these siege engines were invented by Uzziah 400 years earlier, and were adopted by the nations generally, with improvements. As these engines are not mentioned by Homer in his description of the siege of Troy, they were evidently unknown among the Greeks in the poet's time. With the smaller implements of war, such as spears, helmets, slings, shields, and bows, which the king furnished, mention is made for the first time in history of an engine for shooting arrows and hurling great stones from the walls of Jerusalem. Then the significant record that in his war against the Philistines he broke down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, would clearly indicate that one of the military engines of his invention must have been the battering-ram.

The Edomites, Arabs, Philistines, and Ammonites were all made to feel the power of Judah's arms, and Egypt stood in wholesome awe of the name of Uzziah—a name which must ever shine with brilliant distinction on the same scroll of fame with the names of Solomon and Jehoshaphat. That this king should spend his last days in misery must be the regret of all who have admired his patriotism, talent, and devotion. In the beginning, as a lad of sixteen, he sought God and, by the record, so long as he sought the Lord he prospered. What a light such words throw upon that national history to give us the true philosophy of it! Was it not ever so? While the people were true to the law of righteousness, faithful to the religion of their fathers and the worship of Jehovah, the nation prospered both in peace and war. Their calamities and misfortunes followed their apostasy. As they offended God and transgressed the laws of pure religion, they sank into vices which enervated and impoverished them and made them the easy prey of invaders and ambitious conquerors. In the pride and exaltation of his success and prosperity, Uzziah presumptuously, if not sacrilegiously, assumed to exercise the functions of the priestly office, and boldly entered the temple to burn the incense upon the altar. Rebuked though he was by Azariah, the chief priest, and violently resisted by four-score priests, the king angrily persisted in his act of trespass upon the sanctuary. As he raised the censer to burn incense he was smitten with leprosy. To the dismay of all, that dreadful white spot appeared in his forehead. This king, who had accomplished so much for Judah by

his piety, intelligence, military and inventive genius, and by his loyalty to all the interests of the people and of the nation, spent his last days in the leper hospital, separated from the world. The administration of state affairs passed to his son Jotham, whose regency gave such satisfaction that the people were warranted in crowning him king on the death of his illustrious father, Uzziah.

Jotham carried out the same policy which had made his regency acceptable to the people, and seemed animated with the progressive spirit of his father. He continued the internal improvement of the kingdom, constructed towers and castles in the forests, built cities in the mountains, fortified Jerusalem, and built the high gate of the temple. He maintained the military strength of the kingdom and secured vast tribute from the Ammonites. At the close of his rather prosperous reign of sixteen years, his kingdom was invaded by the allied forces of Syria and Israel under the leadership of Rezin and Pekah. This conflict, however, did not reach a serious form while Jotham lived; he bequeathed it to his successor, Ahaz, who proved quite incompetent to carry it to a successful issue. In his sore distress, as we have found, Ahaz formed an alliance with Tiglath-Pileser, and then met the united forces of Syria and Israel with the allied armies of Assyria and Judah. Ahaz proved himself fully as able to form alliances with foreign powers as Pekah of Israel, and he met the invaders with the overwhelming might of Tiglath-Pileser's Assyrian hosts. While Israel never recovered from this thunderbolt which Ahaz hurled upon her, though she invited it by her own ambitious design to subvert the southern kingdom, the alliance which Ahaz formed with Assyria proved a most disastrous one for Judah, since the price which Ahaz paid for the assistance of Tiglath-Pileser was no less than Judah's humiliating submission to the Assyrian yoke. The religious deficiencies of Ahaz were as marked as his lack of political sagacity. The policy of internal improvement pursued by his father and grandfather was not adopted by Ahaz, and his abominable idolatry stands out in marked contrast with the piety of his immediate predecessors. He closed the temple; instituted new idolatries; turned to the service of his enemies' gods, and introduced the Syrian forms of worship. When the temple was opened, behold! it had been transformed into a temple of idolatry. So far did the king in his religious perversion go, that he offered his own son as a burnt sacrifice according to the inhuman rites of the most degraded heathenism.



ESTHER.

CHAPTER XI.

SENNACHERIB AND THE ASSYRIANS.

THE night seems to be rapidly closing in upon Judah, and the dread power which is to overwhelm both the northern and southern kingdoms has already secured a foothold, has struck Israel the first blow, and placed upon Judah the galling yoke of that complete conquest and subjugation which idolatry has unfitted them to resist. A gleam of light breaks fitfully through the gathering storm-clouds in the virtue of Hezekiah and the righteousness of his reign. He had inherited a demoralized kingdom, but not a demoralized nature, from his father. Now and then the good blood will come to the surface in spite of or in harmony with the so-called law of moral heredity. It is a remarkable fact, however, that one can never predicate a king's character on his father's record, whether it be bad or good. The good Jotham's son is the wicked Ahaz, and the wicked Ahaz's son is the righteous Hezekiah. Now and then the flickering, dying light of this Hebrew genius would leap up as with renewed life. The gathering clouds would at times brighten as by the flashes of lightning before the breaking of the storm in greater fury and the sinking of the nation into denser night and more hopeless chaos. Hezekiah did what he could to stay the tottering empire and turn the people to higher paths of national life. He not only reopened the temple and revived Jehovah-worship with the rites and ceremonies of the house of the Lord, but he began and prosecuted a relentless crusade against the idolatry which had been favored by his father, Ahaz. He adopted a different political or international policy from that by which Ahaz had humiliated Judah at the feet of Assyria. He resisted the Assyrian yoke and tried to establish that independence of his country which had been bartered to Assyria for the coöperation of Tiglath-Pileser against Syria and Israel. Hezekiah proved himself a true political and religious reformer. But, like all reformers of the genuine sort, he was opposed, and had to stand up against a world. His measures were resisted by many of his own idolatrous people and by Judah's Assyrian masters. There were not wanting those who scoffed at the revival of the temple services and the historic old feasts of the Levitical system. Then the cessation of tribute to Assyria meant the beginning of war. Nearly all the Palestinian powers had thrown off the yoke of Assyria, but the conqueror was not tardy in hastening into the land with sufficient force to subdue scores of rebellious vassals. Sennacherib invaded Palestine with a formidable host, swept down the western shore and captured city after city; bringing Sidon, Tyre, Ekron, Joppa, Askelon, Timnath, and Ashdod to terms, capturing forty-six fortified cities of Judah and marching upon Jerusalem. The price of peace was 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold. So depleted was Judah's treasury that Hezekiah could not meet the demand of the Assyrian without robbing the temple of its golden ornaments. Sennacherib saw to what extremities the kingdom was reduced, and in his ambition dreamed that the time was ripe for a bold stroke of complete conquest and spoliation. He, therefore, immediately demanded the unconditional surrender of Jerusalem. The Assyrian had established himself before Lachish, as the monuments represent him, to prosecute the siege of that city, and from that place sent the messengers Tartan, Rabсарis, and Rabshakeh to demand the surrender of Jerusalem. These messengers were met by Hezekiah's representatives, Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah. In the parley Rabshakeh was spokesman for the Assyrians, and Eliakim for the Jews. The Assyrians insulted the Jews and tried to incite them to treason to their God, their king, and their country. Rabshakeh, transcending the limits of diplomatic courtesy, harangued the people as they gathered on the walls of the city, advising them to yield to the king of Assyria. Eliakim hastened to King Hezekiah

with the results of the unsatisfactory parley. With the all-conquering Assyrian thundering at the gates of the city, Hezekiah turned to the prophet of God and requested Isaiah to call upon the Lord for deliverance. Isaiah's words were like a trumpet peal of victory to the ears of the disheartened king. A defiant answer was sent to Sennacherib. The doom of the Assyrian army was predicted. The Lord would send a "blast" against them. In the meantime Sennacherib had raised the siege of Lachish and pitched against Libnah. When the messengers returned and the intelligence came that the king of Ethiopia was marching against the Assyrians to the assistance of the Jews, Sennacherib dispatched messengers again to Jerusalem with a letter containing his ultimatum. Hezekiah went into the temple and spread this letter before the Lord in earnest prayer. Isaiah then broke forth in sublime strains of poetic prophecy which reached a climax in the assuring language:

"Therefore thus saith the Eternal in regard to the king of Assyria:
 He shall not come against this city,
 Nor shoot an arrow there,
 Nor assault it with shield,
 Nor throw up a siege wall against it.
 By the way by which he came he shall return;
 And he shall not come against this city, is the decree of the Eternal;
 But I will protect this city to save it,
 For mine own sake and for the sake of David, my servant."

That night saw the destruction of the proud army of Assyria. Isaiah had strengthened Hezekiah's heart with the assurance that the Lord would send a "blast" against the enemy so that not an arrow should smite the city. Byron has put into verse the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy:

"The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,
 And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
 And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
 When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

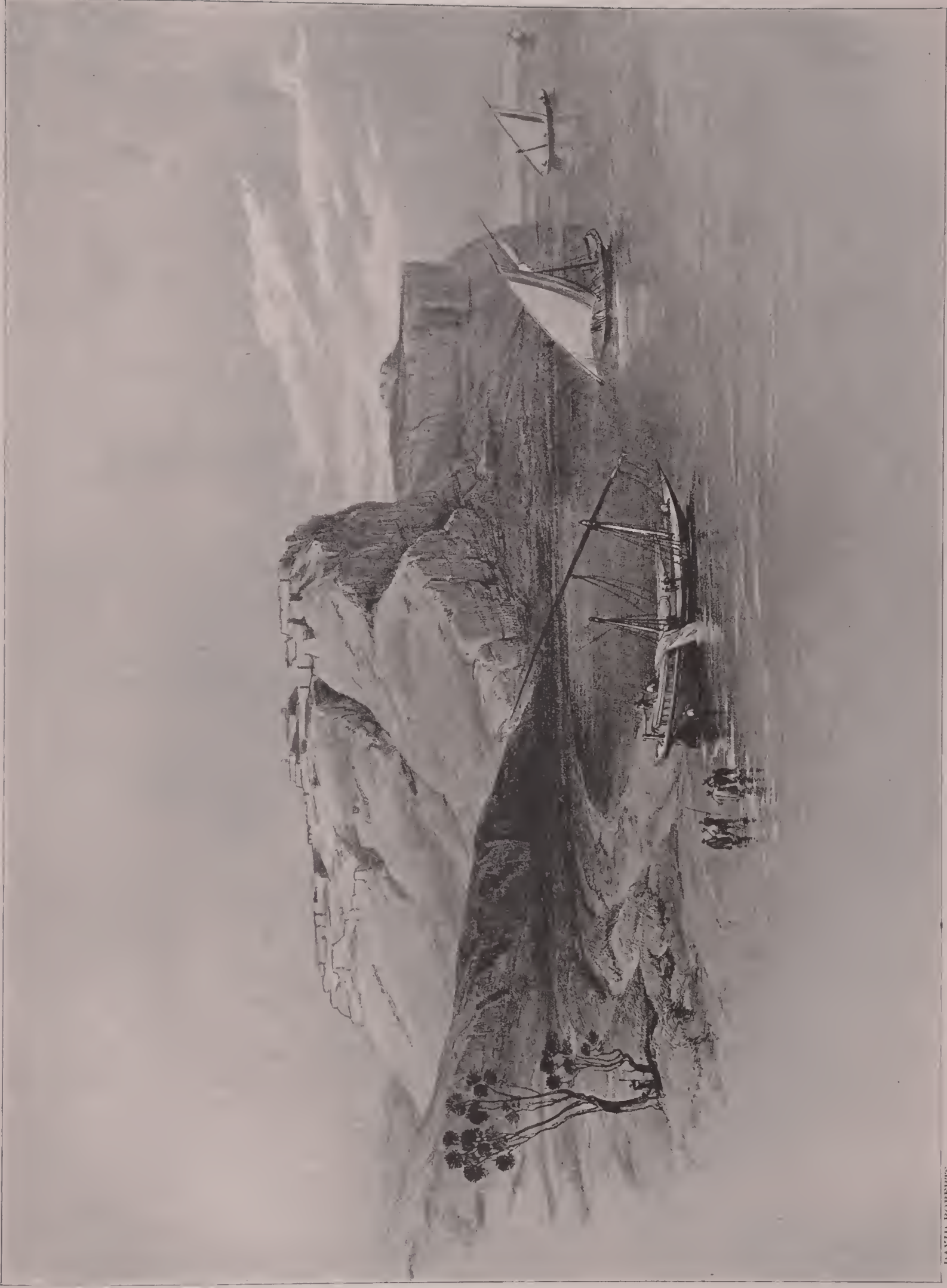
 Like the leaves of the forest when Summer is green,
 That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
 Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn hath blown,
 That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

 For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
 And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed!
 And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
 And their hearts but once heaved, and forever grew still!

 * * * * * * * * * *

 And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
 And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
 And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
 Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!"

The angel or messenger of death came in the form of a pestilential blast, the destructive simoom, in which 185,000 Assyrians perished. If there were any disposition to eliminate the supernatural from this event, certainly the natural destruction of the Assyrian army need present to the student no serious difficulty. Victor Hugo attributes the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo to a few drops of rain, more or less, which in the early morning made the roads unfit for the movement of artillery. In other words, he claimed that providence defeated the "man of destiny." It was certainly the severity of the Russian blasts that made Napoleon's march on Moscow disastrous and so decimated his army that he never recovered his pristine strength.



DAVID ROBERTS

• FORTRESS OF IBRIM, NUBIA.

When Cambyses III., the son and successor of Cyrus the Great, invaded and conquered Egypt, he sent an army to destroy the Temple of Ammon at Siwah, but it was overtaken by the deadly simoom and perished in the desert. Sennacherib's army was in the region which was often swept by this destructive storm, and it was doubtless overwhelmed by the "blast" which was figuratively an angel of death, a messenger of the Lord, and in reality, a visitation of divine providence. The record of this disaster was not inscribed on Assyrian monuments. Sennacherib gives a very full and detailed account of his invasion on the monuments, which may still be deciphered. He mentions the cities captured on this expedition and gives the names of the kings and kingdoms resubjugated which had broken from Assyrian control since Sargon and Tiglath-Pileser's conquests. He represents Hezekiah as imprisoned in Jerusalem like a bird in a cage, and gives an account of the siege of Jerusalem with the enormous treasure which he carried away to Nineveh, but nothing is recorded of the "blast" which smote his army with death. The only historical reference to the calamity which befell the Assyrian army that has been found in profane records is the doubtful tradition preserved in Herodotus. The Greek historian relates a story told him by the Egyptian priest to the effect that Sennacherib, king of the Arabians and Assyrians, marched a large army against Egypt, when the priest in power, forsaken by his own people, entered the temple and supplicated the favor of the god he worshipped. While there, he fell asleep and his god appeared to him in a vision, encouraging him and assuring him that he need not fear the invaders, as help would come to him at the proper time. Trusting this vision, the priest-ruler gathered as many followers from among the tradesmen and mechanics as would rally to his standard and took up his position at Pelusium, the entrance to Egypt. When they encamped there a multitude of field mice, pouring in upon the Assyrians, gnawed their bows and quivers and the handles of their shields so that they were without arms and armor, and when the next day dawned they fled and many of them were destroyed. It is very difficult to make this tradition harmonize with the Jewish record of the destruction of Sennacherib's army, although the modifications in the Egyptian story may be due to the mixing up of two records, each colored by national religious sentiments.

Hezekiah evidently treated with Sennacherib by paying him his demand in treasure. This doubtless satisfied the Assyrian and justified him in his monumental boast, while the record of the disaster which subsequently befell his army was suppressed and never inscribed on the monuments for the information of future ages. The Assyrian project failed in so far as it was an attempt to capture Jerusalem and subjugate the Jews. Sennacherib had demanded an unconditional surrender, but for some very sufficient reason — the simoom, if no other — he did not succeed in his ambitious enterprise.

The failure of Sennacherib to capture Jerusalem redounded to the glory of Hezekiah and of Isaiah the prophet, who were held in the highest esteem by the people whom they had saved from national humiliation and delivered from Assyrian bondage. Prosperity immediately followed the withdrawal of the invaders. That fact with the other, that Hezekiah's renown increased, would seem to prove that while Sennacherib may have told the truth on his monument, and nothing but the truth, he did not tell the whole truth. Evidently he had not spoiled Jerusalem so completely as his inscriptions would lead us to believe, nor did he succeed in catching his bird after he had shut him up in the cage. The general enterprise of this great Assyrian, however, was successful and came to a climax in the capture of Libnah and, possibly, of Lachish. One of the most impressive monuments of those events represents Sennacherib seated on his throne with attendants, a bow in one hand and arrows in the other, while the rulers of cities and nations subjugated are appearing before him to sue for peace and to submit to his authority. By an inscription we are informed this monument represents Sennacherib seated before Lachish prosecuting its siege. The Assyrian returned to Nineveh, well satisfied with his enterprise of conquest and with the riches he was able to pour into the national

treasury. He made no further attempt to subjugate the Jews, although his record of conquest does not end with this successful expedition to Palestine. After a splendid, if not incomparable, career of twenty years more in conquest and rule, Sennacherib was ignominiously assassinated. His own

“Sons
Smote him between the altar stones.”

This was a sad and humiliating close of a most illustrious life. For the student of national developments in their political, military, and intellectual phases, the name of Sennacherib must ever have a charm. Not only as one of the conquerors of antiquity, a general of true military genius and of proud exploits, but also as the man who established the supremacy of Assyria, made Nineveh magnificent with palaces and the center of the political, if not the intellectual, world, must Sennacherib ever hold his exalted position in history. There was, perhaps, without their knowing it themselves, great similarity of mind and taste between Hezekiah and Sennacherib; they were both men of culture and learning. Jehoshaphat may have been more nearly the intellectual like of the Assyrian than was Hezekiah. One of the most noteworthy discoveries made by archæology has been the royal library of Sennacherib at Kuyunjik. Layard here brought to light the ruins of splendid palaces which had been built by Sennacherib and his grandson Assurbanipal. Here were found the books of the Assyrians—imperishable books, 10,000 volumes or more, inscribed clay tablets—still in a remarkable state of preservation. Many of these books from the royal library of Sennacherib may now be seen and read in the British Museum. More than all monumental records of battles and conquests, more than all the evidences of wealth, material magnificence, and imperial power that remain to speak of Sennacherib, these books and this library of the royal palace of Kuyunjik reveal the character and true greatness of the Assyrian king. Here is the literature of Assyrian science, religion, and history. Here are their poetry, their mathematics, astronomy, astrology, and theology; the evidences of the enlightenment of a ruler who knew the value of literature and education, art and science, ethics and song, ages before Augustus and his golden age, and centuries before the brilliant Athens of Pericles. No monarch of antiquity, however magnificent his reign, has left a monument which speaks to this age with nobler significance of true greatness than the royal library which Sennacherib left on the banks of the Tigris.

While this powerful king did not again harass the Jews, the Assyrian power which he did so much to augment was only awaiting the day of its great opportunity when it should strike the tottering kingdom of David a crushing blow and sweep this enervated, degenerate people into bondage more humiliating and galling, if not more servile, than the Egyptian bondage from which Moses, by God's providence, had led their ancestors.

The prosperity of Hezekiah, his flourishing vineyards, bursting granaries, multiplying flocks, increasing wealth, honor, and power were not unaccompanied by affliction. But when disease came upon him he sought the prophet's aid, as in the day of Sennacherib's invasion. Isaiah, true to his king, his country, and his God, prays for and is promised Hezekiah's recovery. So surely as the shadow went backward on the sundial of Ahaz, he will be raised to health. God spared the good king's life in answer to prayer. That the turning back of the shadow on the sundial was a miracle need not be insisted upon. That was a natural, meteorological possibility, calling for no divine interference with the laws of light or the principles of astronomy. As the rainbow became the emblem of God's pledge that the world should never again be destroyed by flood, so was this meteorological incident made an emblem of God's promise to restore the king. It were natural to suppose that now the king and Isaiah would be on most intimate and friendly terms with each other. Surely the good prophet had been the very prop and stay of the throne, and in the darkest hour of national peril Hezekiah had leaned upon him as the embodiment of the divine truth—the very messenger of God. But at

no time did Isaiah's light shine out in the darkness more clearly and steadfastly than when it was necessary for him to rebuke the king who had so often solicited his counsel. When Hezekiah was carried away by his prosperity and began to boast of his riches and to parade his great treasures before the wondering eyes of the Babylonian ambassadors, the faithful prophet steadied the king, and kept him from stepping over the brink in his dizzy pride by some very timely and wholesome warning which contained the sad prediction that the very power which these ambassadors represented would some day despoil the kingdom of these and all its riches. The Babylonian power whose alliance he sought, and whose confidence he would gain by a display of his treasures, would some day break the alliance and become an ambitious and all-powerful enemy. That awful day of reckoning was not far distant. The gleam of light which broke through the impending gloom, and made the reign of Hezekiah almost illustrious, was soon to be followed by the deepest darkness that had ever settled on this rapidly declining nation.

Manasseh in no particular resembles his illustrious father, Hezekiah. He does not seem to have inherited a single virtue of his father. Coming to the throne a mere boy, he was both the pupil and the tool of that element in the government which had persistently antagonized all reformation, laughed at the revival of the theocratic ritual, and kept alive in the hearts of the people the mad fire of sensual idolatry, which was burning and devouring the nation's chastity, virtue, and strength. Long as was this reign of fifty-five years, the Jewish historians have been loath to record the events which made it one of the most corrupt and vicious that blots and stains any national history. So despicable was the character of Manasseh that his name is seldom mentioned in Jewish literature. He was the Nero of Judah's kings. Not only did a reaction from Hezekiah's theocratic policy set in, but a persecution began which all the cruelties of Smithfield fires, all the horrors of St. Bartholomew's day, all the pagan savagery of Nero's and Diocletian's dungeons and wild beasts' dens, cannot by comparison diminish or eclipse in enormity. Doubtless Isaiah fell with the martyrs in this dark and depraved reign when the streets of Jerusalem ran with innocent blood. The idolatries which Hezekiah had overthrown Manasseh reëstablished. He also added to the other abominations, witchcraft, sorcery, fire-worship, and the adoration of the heavenly bodies. The extreme to which this monster carried the vilest and most sensual idolatries far exceeded any ever before attempted by his idolatrous predecessors. He went so far as to turn the house of the Lord into a temple of idols, polluting the sacred place with the indecent images of Astarte and placing Baal and Astarte in possession of Jehovah's sanctuary. To give more emphatic approval of the Ammonitish worship of Moloch, this depraved king caused the fires to be rekindled in the vale of Hinnom and made his own sons pass through the flames. There was not a form of idolatry practiced by the surrounding nations that was not only tolerated but established and propagated in Jerusalem to the exclusion of Jehovah-worship. This alone seemed to be prohibited. The insane bigotry of idolatry broke forth in most cruel persecution, which swept away not only the faithful few of the common people but destroyed the most intellectual classes, the priests and prophets, poets and authors who were true to the old theocratic system.

Loath as Jewish prophets and historians have been to pollute their pages with any mention of Manasseh, that name appears on the Assyrian monuments, in the record of Esar-haddon's conquests. According to that stone record, Manasseh was overthrown, and according to the Jewish Scriptures, Manasseh was captured and led a prisoner to Babylon by the generals of Esar-haddon. Found hiding like a shrinking coward in the hedge, rather than facing the enemy like a brave man of royal dignity and patriotic spirit, he was led away to Babylon like a beast, with rings through his lips and chains upon his feet. While suffering the pains and humiliations of captivity, Manasseh repents of his idolatries, which he now sees have brought disgrace and disaster upon him and his kingdom. He returns by the providence of a forgiving

God, whose mercy he supplicates, and as the vassal of the Assyrian monarch continues on the throne of Judah. The few remaining years of his reign witness a reformation in which the repentant king tries to undo the idolatrous mischief of his earlier years. With all his well-meant endeavors to uproot idolatry and restore the ancient Jehovah-worship, it was difficult, if not impossible, to stem the tide to which he had early given such mad, impetuous fury. This may be seen in the fact that his son, Amon, followed in his footsteps of sin, idolatry, and wickedness, only to be assassinated by his own servants. Amon's reign lasted but two years.

CHAPTER XII.

JOSIAH AND REFORM.

IN Josiah we have again a remarkable study in heredity. His father and grandfather were base idolaters, but he occupies a place beside Hezekiah and Jehoshaphat as one of the few virtuous and godly kings of Judah, whose reign reflected honor alike upon himself and his kingdom. Amon, his father, was assassinated when Josiah was a lad but eight years old. In boyhood, however, Josiah displayed those virtuous traits of character which gave promise of a noble manhood and of a righteous reign. No king had come to Judah's throne in more stirring times. The nations were being shaken to their foundations with the earthquake of universal revolution. Crowns were falling, thrones tottering, kingdoms rocking on their bases. All the powers of the earth were up in arms, each seeking the subjugation of the other, ambitious for universal empire. Egypt was assuming an insolent, haughty, and domineering attitude toward the north. Nineveh was declining and Babylon rising. Assyrian supremacy was giving way before the new, swift, ambitious power of Chaldea. The north was swarming with strange, wild, hardy Scythians, who came like the whirlwind to destroy the effete civilizations of the south. Poor Judah seemed a withered branch tossing on the wild billows of this political maelstrom, destined to be sucked into the vortex of destruction. Prophecies poured forth from the lips of the anointed seers against all these self-vaunting kingdoms. Not poor, dwindling, almost defunct Judah alone, but Egypt, Assyria and Chaldea were burdens of prophecy. Babylon and Nineveh, no less than Jerusalem, were warned of impending evil, punishments, providential chastisings, destructions, annihilations.

The corruption of Manasseh's fifty-five years' reign and of Amon's equally vicious reign, left Judah in the most depraved and hopeless condition to which it had ever sunken. Josiah, the boy-king, must have been looked upon as a helpless victim of most unfortunate circumstances, doomed to greater humiliation and ignominy than his father or his detestable grandfather. Once more, however, and only once more, does light shine in the darkness. How patient has God been! How many opportunities has he given this people to repent and turn to him! How often has he tried to teach them the lesson that righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people! Every righteous ruler has been blessed with prosperity. Every reformation has been followed by manifestations of divine favor. In the abundance of their harvests, the success of their arms, the growth of their power, and the honor of their name among the nations, that people ever found that God blessed them in every new resolve and effort of theirs to turn from idolatry and renew their devotion to the theocratic system of which they had been made the peculiar custodians. Once more before the awful catastrophe of final ruin, God blesses with his favor the reign of a righteous king.

Josiah was a reformer at the age of twelve. He soon entered upon a determined warfare against idolatry; tore down the images, destroyed the abominable groves; extinguished the

Moloch fires; demolished the altars and temples by which the people had been corrupted with every form of unchaste and demoniacal idolatry, from the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth to fiery Moloch. Not content with issuing royal edicts for the suppression and absolute extirpation of idolatry, he gave personal supervision to the destruction of the idols, groves, and temples of false religions. This virtuous iconoclasm, this work of righteous destruction, was followed by a reformatory construction, a restoration of Jehovah-worship with all the ancient symbols and ceremonies. At a great expense, and by the employment of large numbers of workmen, Josiah restored the temple which had been so long polluted with idolatry. Moreover, the wear and tear of over two hundred years' service since it was repaired must have left the temple in a sad state of dilapidation. For the honor of God and of the nation, Josiah would have this treasure house of Jehovistic symbolisms become, by its renovation and beautified restoration, a figure of a regenerate nationalism, the emblem of the moral and religious transformation of the people. While the repairs of the temple were progressing, a most important discovery was made by Hilkiah the high priest. Rummaging in some obscure, neglected part of the historic old house, clearing out rooms and corners which had been receptacles for relics during the changes which had gone on, or ransacking what may have been the archives of the temple, Hilkiah came upon a document which created a sensation — nay, a revolution. It proved to be an old copy of the Law, doubtless the long-neglected Pentateuch. It had been relegated to the rubbish heap or laid aside like a worn-out garment for which the original owner had no further need. What a comment on the national character! There was revealed the philosophy of their decline. They had thrown their Magna Charta into the waste basket. They had relegated the very chart and compass of the ship of state to the ash bin. They had pronounced their theocratic constitution null and void and had pitched it into the corner of neglect, obscurity, and forgetfulness. Their subsequent history was the logical result of ignoring the Book of the Law. When the good priest brought out the dusty, moldy book, from its age-long obscurity, he hastened to send it to Josiah by Shaphan the scribe. The king's agitation knew no bounds, for when portions of the book were read in his hearing he rent his clothes, and ordered an inquiry to be made of the Lord — that is, he commanded that a prophet be consulted. The book contained such threatenings against evil doers and violators of the law, and the nation had been so manifestly trampling the law under foot, and the punishments threatened in the book seemed so certainly impending, that the nation was in danger. It looked as though God were about to destroy them for their infidelity. The book must be interpreted.

Evidently neither Jeremiah nor Zephaniah was residing in Jerusalem at that time. The committee, therefore, consisting of Hilkiah the priest, Shaphan the scribe, Ahikam, Achbor, and Asabiah, sought Huldah the prophetess. Out of obscurity God called a devoted woman into history. The only mission she had, so far as history reveals, was to shed light on this long-neglected constitution. It was a critical epoch. The hour of demand found her faithful; walking in the ways of God, living in the true spirit of prophecy; ready to teach the scribes, the priest, the king, the nation. A Jeremiah or an Isaiah could not have done better. She rises before us in the beauty of her virtue, the steadfastness of her faith, the luster of her intelligence, and the dignity of her prophetic character to prove, as Miriam, Deborah, and Hannah proved, that the poetic gift and the prophetic office could be as safely intrusted to women as to men. Since Miriam sounded the loud timbrels over Egypt's dark sea, and Sappho's singing charmed the isles of Greece, and our bright day listens to the sweet and lofty strains of Jean Ingelow and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, the world must recognize the divine gifts of woman. As teachers, too, women have distinguished themselves. Deborah was a judge of Israel; Aspasia was the teacher of Socrates and Pericles; Hortensia instructed Roman orators in eloquence; Hypatia adorned the presidency of the Platonic Academy, in Alexandria; Vittoria Colonna and Alessandra Scala were bright scholars of the Renaissance; Mary

Somerville was astonishingly proficient in science; Amelia B. Edwards was an accomplished Egyptologist; Elizabeth Carter, like Lady Jane Grey, was a linguistic genius; George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, and Jane Porter were queens in the realm of literary romance; and Rosa Bonheur, Harriet Hosmer, and Angelica Kauffman have made the world more beautiful with their art. Thus the intelligence, genius, and virtue of woman, against the prejudices of all history, have proved God to be no respecter of sex in the bestowment of his gifts of mind and graces of heart. How brightly does this star of Jewish womanhood shine in the gathering darkness of that far-off and unhappy time! Fearless, intelligent, and true to her high prophetic calling, Huldah interpreted the spirit of the new-found Book of Moses. It was a startling revelation to the messengers and to the king. The fulfillment of that divine word was assured. The prophetess courageously foretold the consequences of the nation's infidelities and idolatries. The law must be fulfilled. In the divine logic of events, punishment will follow disobedience. The only ray of light that came to the comfort of Josiah was in the assurance that he should not live to witness the final catastrophe. His upright life and reign should, therefore, be rewarded; the nation's doom should be averted until after his death. Little consolation came to so noble and patriotic a soul in the assurance that he should be spared the personal sorrow of witnessing his country's fall. The inevitability of the nation's ruin must have banished from his unselfish mind whatever comfort that single ray of light was sent to bestow.

As if inspired with a purpose to prevent the inevitable, Josiah entered with fresh spirit upon the reformation of the kingdom. He summoned the nation to Jerusalem—all the elders, priests, prophets, and people of every rank and class. He read to them the new-found book, which had been a lamp to the feet and a light to the path of their virtuous and godly ancestors from the days of Moses down to the time of David, their typical king. The people were as profoundly moved as the king had been by the reading of this long-lost book, and with Josiah they stood up *en masse* and joined in a renewed covenant to obey the law of God and walk in the paths of their righteous fathers. The last relic of idolatry was uprooted. Astarte of the Zidonians, Chemosh of the Moabites, and Milcom of the Ammonites were destroyed, with all the paraphernalia of altars, images, groves, and temples by which the abominations were ceremonialized.

In the restoration of the theocratic symbolism, the renovation of the temple, and the renewal of the old covenant, Josiah prepared for the celebration of the passover on a scale of grandeur not known since the kingdom was founded. He furnished the people with 30,000 lambs and kids and 3,000 bullocks for the sacrifices. A most elaborate temple service was prepared. The grand old music of David and Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun was rehearsed, to fill again the house of the Lord with the praises due to his name. The smoke of the sacrifices ascended from the newly consecrated altars; the old temple echoed once more with the music of voice and instrument burdened with the holy pathos and triumph of the psalms. All Jerusalem was ablaze with the splendors of the most important and solemn festival of the Jewish ceremonialism. Not since the days of Samuel had there been so grand and awe-inspiring an observance of the passover.

With this religious reformation there came an era of peace and industrial revival—a short but welcome respite, in those troublous times, from civil strife and external conflict. There were tokens of a long reign of righteousness, as though God had repented of his wrath and would save the nation. Josiah, in his patriotic loyalty to his country and his religious devotion to the theocratic constitution, became the most blameless ruler and the most fearless and uncompromising reformer in the history of the Jewish kingdom. Not only since the partition of the empire, but from the reign of David, 400 years before, no king of all the many who had sat on David's throne made so determined and successful a warfare upon idolatry or so completely

uprooted and destroyed the manifold abominations. But, alas! He could not save his country. Here, however, we come to one of the mysteries of that strange, eventful history. What might have been in store for the Jewish nation, had Josiah been content to pursue a policy of amity with the surrounding nations, or of non-interference with the international conflicts which were raging about him, it is impossible to say. What the motive was which prompted him to lead his insignificant forces against the regenerated power of ambitious Egypt, we know not. But when Pharaoh-Necho led his Egyptian hosts against Nineveh, or Babylon, for some inexplicable reason Josiah marched out the little army of Judah against him. The magnanimity of the great Egyptian was admirable. Not in haughtiness, nor in exasperating contempt did he greet the Jew, but with the generous spirit of a great soldier and a kingly king he assured him, in the gentlest, most courteous, and conciliatory terms that he was not bent on the conquest of Judah, but had a larger enterprise on hand than the overthrow of her little army. Deaf to the Pharaoh's mild remonstrance, Josiah led his army against the Egyptian forces only to be dashed to pieces like the waves against Gibraltar. Josiah chose Megiddo, in the historic, battle-scarred plain of Jezreel, for his attack. Megiddo was a strategic military point between the seacoast and Jerusalem and North Palestine. Was Josiah dreaming of some such victory over the mighty hosts of Egypt as Barak there won over the hosts of Sisera, when the stars in their courses fought against Sisera? Or had he in mind the glorious day when the Midianites were destroyed by the illustrious band which saw the triumph of the sword of the Lord and of Gideon? Had he, moreover, given too literal an interpretation to the old book which had been found in the temple, wherein the righteous were promised power to overcome the nations of the earth? Or was Josiah far-sighted enough to see that Egypt was bent on universal conquest and was ambitious for universal empire, and that the overthrow of his own kingdom had been reckoned upon? Did he see that Egyptian domination in the north meant, sooner or later, the subjugation of his own country? Or was Josiah at this time the vassal of the sovereign against whom the Pharaoh was leading his conquering arms, and was he in duty bound to aid that sovereign by harassing, crippling, and impeding the progress of the Egyptians, if he could not hope to defeat them? These are questions which cannot be satisfactorily answered. Just as difficult would it be to answer the question: Was it destiny? was it in the purpose and by the providence of God that Josiah should do this seemingly rash, insane thing? Say what we will, this just and virtuous king died the death of a hero and a patriot on Megiddo's fatal field.

With Josiah fell Judah; with him sank in blood the sun of Davidic pride and power. In his death perished — but perished heroically and royally — the last royal patriot and righteous reformer who had sought to save his country, adorn the Jewish throne, and emancipate his race from the religious and political thralldom of alien and corrupting idolatries. As they bore Josiah from Megiddo, and the chariot hearse entered Jerusalem, the lamentations of the people knew no restraint. The last hope of the faithful had perished. The noble reformer had fallen, and fallen in the midst of his prosperity, with the favor of God resting on him. The long-threatened thunderbolt had leaped out of a cloudless sky, and from the zenith splendors of a new and better national day the country was suddenly plunged into night and chaos. "God will not always chide, neither will he restrain his wrath forever." The only redeeming feature of this sudden and irretrievable disaster is in the fulfillment of God's promise, made to Josiah by Huldah the prophetess, that he should not look upon Judah's final overthrow and have his patriotic heart rent by the humiliation, conquest, subjugation, and captivity of his people. God took him in the midst of battle; took him with all his valor on him; took him from the chariot of heroism and the field of honor: took him as he took Leonidas from Thermopylæ and Gustavus Adolphus from Lützen — not like the Swede, victorious, but like the Greek, overthrown — yet as the one in triumph and the other in defeat: true, heroic, righteous, and patriotic to the last. Never before had the people so universally bewailed the death of a

king. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. Jeremiah broke forth into lamentations. The singing men and singing women continued an annual dirge in sorrowful commemoration of his death, while through all the subsequent history of the Jews his name was held in highest reverence as one of the brightest that adorned their national history. In after ages Jesus, the Son of Sirach, wrote: "His memory is like costly incense, and sweet as honey to every mouth." In his fall, may not the people say in mournful truth what Antony said over the stricken Cæsar:

"O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down."

CHAPTER XIII.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S CONQUEST OF THE JEWS.

THE battle of Megiddo resulted in still other serious changes in affairs. By it a new enemy was added to the many that had attempted the subjugation of Judah. The Egyptians dictated terms to the Jews — nay, dictated their politics. After the people had chosen Jehoahaz to reign over them as the successor of Josiah, he was able to hold the throne but three months — long enough, however, to demonstrate his unfitness for the position which his illustrious father had adorned. The Pharaoh whose power had overwhelmed the arms of Judah at Megiddo came up against the Jews again, captured the royal weakling, pretending to reign in the seat of Josiah, and carried him away, loaded with chains, to Egypt. Ezekiel in his lamentation for the princes of Israel seems to voice the national disappointment in the character and career of Jehoahaz, "the young lion" who was brought with chains unto the land of Egypt, and Judah was compelled to take another of her whelps and make him a young lion. Ah, how long they had waited for the true "Lion of the tribe of Judah!" But no, Judah was not prepared to bear that Lion. She must be purged of her idolatry; she must be chastened, purified and saved forever from her false gods, and become, as never before, in all her history, Jehovah's people, the worshipers of the one true God and worshipers of him only; and then from her loins should spring the promised power, the "Lion of the tribe of Judah."

Jehoiakim, elevated to the throne by the Egyptian power, was but a vassal of the proud Pharaoh whose conquering arms seemed destined to achieve a universal dominion. Jehoiakim was forced to pay for his power. The tribute of 100 talents of silver and a talent of gold was more than the tottering throne was worth. This tribute was secured by burdensome tax and cruel oppression. The treasury of Egypt was replenished from the lost fortunes and wages of the Jews. The contact of Judah with Egypt and Assyria had inspired the Jewish kings ambitiously to emulate the Pharaohs and such kings as Sargon, Sennacherib and Esar-haddon in the material aggrandizement of their capital. Perhaps no king of Judah was more completely under foreign influence than Jehoiakim, the vassal of Necho. While the burdens of taxation to meet the tribute demanded by Egypt were crushing the people, Jehoiakim extravagantly set to work building a palace in which he sank the residue of the national treasure. In this enterprise he reduced the wages of the laborers and robbed the people of the reward of their toil. Against this oppression of the hireling in his wages, Jeremiah lifted up his voice in protest, condemnation, and warning: "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work!" The true prophet of God has always been the friend of the people and the champion of their rights. This the prophet and minister of God must ever be.

The toiling millions of the earth, sons of the high and holy aristocracy of honest industry, coworkers with God in replenishing and subduing the earth, creating the wealth of the nations, and laying the material foundations of civilization, should never lack the sympathy and fellowship of the ministers of God. When the burden crushes, when power oppresses, when the mean and unjust wage humiliates and impoverishes, and when the unholy sentiment which sneers at toil and breeds contempt for labor gains ascendancy, then must God's prophets lift up their voices and spare not. Woe to the city, the kingdom, or the republic whose aggrandizement has cost the people their manhood, their liberty, and their blood! Woe to a nation whose extreme wealth is the measure of its extreme poverty; whose toiling poor are sunken as low as its favored and idle rich are lifted up; whose submerging ocean depths are equal to its exalting mountain heights!

In that gloomy period, never more discouraging and hopeless to the toiling masses of Judah, the faithful prophet wrote a book. Perhaps the king was not in the humor to say with Job: "Oh, that mine adversary had written a book." The prophet called his scribe, Baruch, to his aid—a fearless man with the spirit of his master. Jeremiah dictated to Baruch the substance of the book that contained a catalogue of the punishments which God was to visit upon the nation for their sins. The book was then read in the hearing of the people as they gathered to the temple. It created a sensation and became the talk of the city. The princes heard this latest book discussed, and, curious—nervously curious—to know its import, they ordered Baruch to read it in the palace as he had read it in the temple. The fearless scribe complied with the request of the princes, and when they asked for the name of the book's author they learned that it was Jeremiah. Whether from good or evil motives, the princes advised Baruch and his master, Jeremiah, to go into hiding, if they expected to escape the wrath of the king, who should immediately be informed of the book. The king was no less curious than his princes had been to have this sensational little book read. But when the character of its contents became apparent, he cut the book into shreds with his knife and flung them into the fire with anger and contempt. How unwilling is a guilty conscience to hear the sentence pronounced on wrong doing! "What is truth?" asked Pilate, and, as Bacon said, would not wait for an answer. What is in the book? asked Jehoiakim, and would not wait to have it read. He flung the truth into the fire that wintry day, and with it went the last hope of Judah. God had commanded this book to be written that it might bring the nation to repentance and avert the impending doom. Jehoiakim tore it to shreds as the nation will be torn to shreds. This king, in his reign of eleven years, proved to be not only an oppressor of the wage-earners, of the industrial people, but also of those among the intellectual classes who were in sympathy with the working people and protested against the wrongs which were heaped upon them. He was, above all, angry with Jeremiah, the laborer's friend and champion, and God's fearless, faithful prophet. It was during this reign that Jeremiah symbolized by a bit of very dramatic acting the condition of subjugation to which the nation was dooming itself. He made wooden yokes and wore them on his neck about the streets of Jerusalem. The prophet's impressive, symbolic prophecy was not long in reaching fulfillment. The conqueror was at the door—not Egypt, but Chaldea. The ambitious Pharaoh-Necho, who had destroyed Josiah's army at Megiddo and seated Jehoiakim on the throne of Judah in the place of Jehoahaz, whom he took captive into Egypt, was checked in his triumphal progress and overwhelmingly defeated at Carchemish and despoiled of his Syrian tributaries. From that time, the fourth year of Jehoiakim's reign, Egypt had no authority over Judah, which became subject to Chaldea. This new allegiance Jehoiakim tried to throw off, influenced by the Egyptian element and by his indebtedness to the Egyptian power which had seated him on his throne. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, brought the Jew to terms by threatening to carry him to Babylon in chains, as the Pharaoh had taken his brother captive into Egypt. But no, even a worse fate is in store

for this miserable excuse for a king. Jeremiah declares that he shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gate of Jerusalem. Nebuchadnezzar lays successful siege to Jerusalem, loads Jehoiakim with chains, plunders the house of God of its sacred and costly vessels, and, with a goodly number of hostages, evidently the flower of Jewish aristocracy, prepares to depart. Changing his mind as to what disposition he should make of Jehoiakim, and yielding to the humiliated king's importunities or to the influence of the Chaldean party manipulating Jewish politics, he releases him and restores him to the throne as a vassal king.

Among the few captives evidently taken to Babylon at this time must have been the youthful Daniel, who, as though by the ordering of providence, was to act a noble part in the history of the Captivity, stand for Jehovah-worship in the midst of a splendid and powerful heathenism, exemplify the righteous teachings of the true Jewish religion, ameliorate the unhappy condition of his subjugated race, and at last work out the political problem of their emancipation and return to Jerusalem.

The forces of the Chaldean were withdrawn, but no more than three years had passed by before Jehoiakim, influenced by his Egyptian sympathizers and his Egyptian advisers, and deaf to Jeremiah's good advice—good politics, too, as well as good advice—rebelled against the authority to which he had sworn vassalage. Without further trifling, Nebuchadnezzar sent his mercenaries against Judah in the form of marauding, harassing tribes of Syrians, Moabites, and Chaldeans, who kept the little and despised kingdom in a state of continual unrest and alarm.

At last, the king of Babylon, uniting his forces, comes up with imposing strength to crush the petty vassal who has broken his royal vows and defied the Chaldean authority. Jehoiakim is slain, and his death causes scarcely a pang of regret. It is as Jeremiah had predicted: "They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah, my brother! or, Ah, sister! They shall not lament for him, saying, Ah, Lord, or, Ah, his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass." So, without the sorrow of his own people, he is hurled by his enemies into the common sewer, cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem. How different from the burial of Asa and the lamentation made for the righteous and patriotic Josiah! How different from the mourning of the American people when, with universal sorrow, they drape the country from sea to sea, and with solemn pomp and magnificence lay to their honored rest such great and noble men as Washington, Lincoln, Garfield, and Grant! Nations render honor to whom honor is due. The people know their true benefactors and will preserve the memory of their character and deeds. High and low, rich and poor, vied with each other in paying honor to the memory of these American patriots. But, yonder, in Jerusalem, where Jehoiakim is buried with the burial of an ass, there can be found "none so poor to do him reverence." It may be very certain that among those oppressed, wronged laborers and mechanics there was little mourning for the king who had robbed them of their wages.

When Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim, comes to the throne, it takes no prophet—no, nor even a shrewd politician—to see that throne is not worth the taking; it is about to fall from its own rottenness. Yet, with the despicable spirit of his father, this young Jehoiachin begins his reign, which is to terminate in less than four months. Pursuing the policy of his father, and yielding to the advice of the Egyptian party, still strong in Jerusalem, he tries to throw off the Chaldean yoke. He is led to Babylon, a captive in chains, and thrown into prison by Nebuchadnezzar, who, with little resistance to overcome, takes Jerusalem once more, and with rich spoil and 10,000 prisoners, including members of the royal family and the prophet Ezekiel, makes his proud capital exult.

This Chaldean power now takes a controlling hand in Jewish politics, and Nebuchadnezzar places Josiah's youngest son, Mattaniah—whom he named Zedekiah—on the throne, as the Pharaoh-Necho did with Jehoiakim. The Chaldean treated Jehoiachin as the Egyptians

treated Jehoiahaz—led him into life-long captivity. Zedekiah, owing his elevation to Nebuchadnezzar, is soon entangled in politics which favor the Egyptian as against the Chaldean supremacy. At first he resists the rebellious influences and adheres to his oath of allegiance, solemnly given to Nebuchadnezzar, in which he is encouraged by the ever-faithful Jeremiah, not only the most enlightened prophet, but also the wisest politician of the kingdom. Although Zedekiah finds it necessary to visit Babylon to quiet the rumors which have reached the court relative to his Egyptian sympathies and his hesitating policy of allegiance to Chaldea, he soon after yields to the powerful Egyptian influence dominant in Jerusalem, and, in violation of Jeremiah's advice and warning, attempts to break the Chaldean yoke. Nebuchadnezzar now hastens with all his forces to settle forever the question of his authority and supremacy. Nothing short of the absolute submission of this rebellious vassal will meet the demand. The powerful monarch has a vast undertaking on hand in this expedition, for not Jerusalem only, but Tyre, Sidon, Lachish, and Azekah, must also be reduced. All of them have asserted, and are trying to achieve, their independence. The Chaldeans lay siege to Jerusalem, and for about eighteen months harass the city, reducing it to famine and the consequent starvation and untold suffering. For a short time the besiegers are drawn off to meet the Egyptian forces coming to the relief of Jerusalem; then the attack is renewed with increasing vigor until the very enginery which the Jews have invented and taught their conquerors how to use makes a breach in the north walls of the city, and the final stroke is impending. Consternation seizes the king and his guard when the news of this disaster reaches their ears. They prepare for flight. No Leonidas and his Spartan band, this; no Ney and the Old Guard, which dies but never surrenders; no Josiah and his valiant band to meet defeat as gloriously as on Megiddo's field! A coward, surrounded by cowards, skulking through the darkened streets by night and creeping out of the city by a breach in the wall, deserting his post, his city, his people, and his kingdom to save his own miserable self—what a figure to represent the last of the kings of Judah! Unable to escape the vigilance of his foes, the miserable Zedekiah is overtaken and captured, and led a prisoner, with his family and attendants, into the presence of Nebuchadnezzar, who, in his rage and in the barbarism of his military and political power, orders Zedekiah's sons to be slain before their father's eyes. Next, with exquisite cruelty, he caused the eyes of the king of Judah to be put out. Jerusalem is then given up to pillage. This was the work, and, doubtless, the reward, of the Chaldean's leading captains. History does not furnish a more horrible picture of crime and cruelty, of suffering, shame, and misery, than the scene which followed the capture of Jerusalem. The conquerors gave vent to every bestial passion, showing no pity for innocent childhood, no reverence for old age, no decent regard for woman's virtue, no commiseration for human suffering. The streets ran blood; the house of God was the scene of robbery and murder; the homes of the people were like butchers' shambles. The walls of the city were torn down; the temple was despoiled of the last sacred relic, of all that remained of any value that could appeal to the cupidity of the conqueror. Then that beautiful house, which had passed into sacred song and history, was set on fire and reduced to a heap, after having stood there more than four hundred years as the symbol of a nation's faith and the figure of God's promise to a race.

To Nebuzar-adan was intrusted the final undertaking of transporting the conquered people to Babylon. Of these, he deported only the better classes, the educated and well to do, the artisans and skilled laborers, men of trades and learned professions. The very poor, shiftless, decrepit, and criminal classes he was politic enough to leave behind him in the land with the humbler and less enlightened herdsmen and farmers. One person of all that city and nation the conqueror treated with respect and even reverence. Jeremiah, as we have seen, was promised immunity. Although the pusillanimous Zedekiah left the illustrious prophet in prison, the night he skulked with his body-guard along the back alleys of Jerusalem and

escaped from the city he had not the courage to defend, the mighty Nebuchadnezzar gave orders to his general-in-chief to spare the prophet and treat him with every consideration of respect and honor. While Zedekiah was treated with contempt and cruelty—blinded, loaded with chains, led a captive to Babylon and there thrust into prison to perish in dishonor—Jeremiah was released from the prison in which he had long been confined by the cruelty of Zedekiah, and was so reverently and honorably used by the conquerors that the choice was given him of going with the captives to Babylon or staying behind with the poor, rejected riff-raff whom the Chaldeans did not think worth transportation. The prophet remained with this little remnant, gathered the humble and squalid people about him and still taught them in the law of God.

Gedaliah, who had been appointed governor over the land by Nebuchadnezzar, succeeded in rallying the Jews, who had been scattered abroad among the surrounding nations of Moab, Ammon, and Edom. Then the deserted vineyards were opened to the people that they might gather the fruits. Just when the good governor was proving himself a wise administrator of affairs and giving the people reason to confide in him and loyally gather about him at Mizpah, he was foully assassinated by Ishmael, an emissary of Baalis, the king of the Ammonites. Many of the Jews and Chaldeans at Mizpah were slain that day when the treachery of Ishmael, a scion of Jewish royalty, transgressed the sacred laws of hospitality and slew the unsuspecting governor at his own board. Gathering as many captives as possible, including the governor's daughters, the assassin, with his Ammonitish soldiers, began his return march to the court of Baalis. Johanan, one of Gedaliah's officers, hastily recruited a company of like brave men with himself, and started in pursuit. He overhauled Ishmael near the pool of Gibeon and rescued the captives, but the assassin made good his escape with a small body-guard of eight men. Johanan now gathered the homeless, hunted refugees about him and led them to Chimham, the place near Bethlehem whence travelers were wont to depart on their journey into Egypt. Here the people looked to Jeremiah for spiritual guidance, soliciting his prayers and intercession with God on their behalf. When the proposition was submitted to the prophet that this little remnant of Judah go into Egypt, ostensibly to escape further molestations of the Chaldeans, Jeremiah advised the people to remain in the land of their fathers, and warned them against plague, famine, and war awaiting them if they disobeyed God. In an oration of great power and feeling Jeremiah cried: "The Lord hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah; Go ye not into Egypt: know certainly that I have admonished you this day." Great as their reverence for the prophet must have been, the people seemed inclined to listen to young men of war, rather than to the old man of counsel. In their haste and enthusiasm the younger men, Azariah and Johanan in particular, charged the old prophet with falsehood in claiming God would not have them go into Egypt. The young men prevailed; "So they came into the land of Egypt, . . . even to Tahpanhes." Here the faithful prophet Jeremiah is said to have suffered martyrdom. The people whose cause he had espoused, to whose welfare he had devoted his life and consecrated his prophetic gifts, at last cruelly stoned him to death.

To-day, after a lapse of nearly 2,500 years, the name of Jeremiah and a prophecy which he made are exciting most interesting discussions among advanced archæologists. This last refuge of the remnant of Judah—Tahpanhes—has become a field of archæological exploration and study, and the discoveries there made harmonize with the remarkable, and for ages the obscure, language of Jeremiah. "Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying, Take great stones in thine hand, and hide them in the clay in the brick-kiln, which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah; and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid; and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them." This Pharaoh's

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home is now known to archæology; the very "brickwork,"¹ or "pavement," mentioned by Jeremiah has been brought to light by the aid of pick and shovel. Great stones have been found buried under this brick pavement, those, possibly, which Jeremiah had buried there in obedience to the word of the Lord. It was not many years after Jeremiah's prophecy that Nebuchadnezzar swept through this very region to the overthrow of Amasis, the usurper of the Egyptian throne. Not far from this spot have been found terra-cotta cylinders, on which are inscribed fragments of the annals of Nebuchadnezzar, in proof of his presence in this locality, where, on his expedition of conquest and subjugation, he must have "set his throne," and "spread his royal pavilion," and made the remnant of Judah which had fled hither for safety feel the cruelty of his power, the final crushing blow of Babylonian conquest.

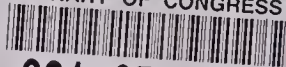
Thus did that people vanish from the land to which God had led them, years before; like chaff before the whirlwind they disappeared, scattered by the strong, swift power of the conquerors whom their faithful prophets recognized as the servants of God. The land of corn and wine that flowed with milk and honey is now without a vine-dresser, a husbandman, or a herdsman to sow the fields, gather the fruits, and tend the neglected flocks. Even the poor, despised remnant, spurned by Nebuchadnezzar, rallied about the standard of Johanan and followed him into Egypt there, in the land where their ancient ancestors were slaves, to perish of famine, pestilence, and war. As the flower of Judah's people, her princes, scholars, artists, merchants, skilled mechanics, and warriors journeyed eastward and at last entered Babylon a conquered and a captive race, the very splendor and magnificence of the Chaldean capital must have brought to memory by striking contrast the desolation and ruin of Jerusalem, once beautiful for situation and the joy of the whole earth. By like powerful contrast the patriotism, intelligence and religious devotion of the all-powerful Nebuchadnezzar must have reminded them of the disloyalty and crimes of those kings who had brought David's throne into contempt, led the people into idolatry, and sowed to the wind, inevitably to reap the whirlwind of national disgrace and ruin. In that far land and wondrous city the lamentation of Jeremiah may have reached the captive people, and there, among the marble temples and sculptured palaces of the city which Nebuchadnezzar's wealth and genius had made the most magnificent in the world, the people whose ancestors had known a Solomon's glory and boasted of a David's power, now, humiliated and broken-hearted, may have taken up the sad refrain:

"How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people!
How is she become as a widow!
She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces,
How is she become tributary!
She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks:
Among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her:
All her friends have dealt treacherously with her,
They are become her enemies.
Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude:
She dwelleth among the heathen, she findeth no rest:
All her persecutors overtook her within the straits."

¹ See Jeremiah xliii, 9, 10 (Revised Version).

F. M. Bristol.

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